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THE

TWO FAMILIES;

OR,

THE POWER OF RELIGION.

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BY

Mrs. J. C. BATEMAN,

THOR OF "THE NETHERWOODS OF OTTERPOOL," "WHO IS TO HAVE IT?" "FORGIVENESS," ETC., ETC.

hoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord!" Psa. cvii, 47.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
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TO

MY DEAR BROTHER,

The Reb. Robert Mascall Chamney, B.A.,

THESE PAGES

ARE

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

Part First.

EARLY TRAINING.

t is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth:" LAM. iii, 27.

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CHAPTER I.

"WHAT are you doing to your bees, this lovely June morning, Mrs. Preston? I thought you never 'took them,' as you call it, before Michaelmas."

"No more I do, in general, ma'am; but you see Miss Eveleen asked me for a small bit of comb for poor Betsey Ford, who lies so low with the fever. I don't think I would have disturbed them just at swarming time for any one else but Miss Eveleen or yourself, for you always want it for a good purpose. I think the bees know it's for poor little Betsey Ford I want their honey; they haven't so much as flapped a wing about it, cunning little things."

Nancy Preston was too anxious not to crush any of her velvety brown favorites, in the critical operation of replacing the top hive on the lower one, to be able to rise and greet Mrs. Herbert, the rector's wife, with her best courtesy, as

was her wont when that lady honored her with a call.

"Ah, poor little Betsey—she has indeed been ill; but Dr. Ashly gives me a good report of her this morning. I hope none of the other children will take the fever. I should think Mr. Ford will remember his obstinacy about that drain, and will let such poisonous black streams be put underground a little quicker than he would allow this to be."

"Poor Ford," said Nancy, still busy with her bees, "I think he is dreadful sorry about it now; he is so very fond of Betsey. I don't think he's a bad heart at bottom, only a bit obstinate like."

"Perhaps he may learn something from this experience, only that we are none of us very ready to learn the lessons that it teaches; and yet it is through experience that God teaches us His laws—if we could only see it."

"He is always a teaching of us," said Nancy Preston, rising up from her hive with a nice fresh piece of honey-comb in her hand, "It do seem strange we don't learn more than we do from it."

"It is," said Mrs. Herbert; "blessed are those who are enabled to discern the Teacher who is instructing them. I think if we could positively realize that it was God so dealing with us, we should more anxiously try to learn of Him. For it is in love that He sends sorrow, and pain, and failure, to bring us to His knowledge. But what

is Miss Eveleen going to do with that beautiful piece of honey-comb? Betsey can't be allowed to eat that yet."

"No, ma'am; it is to make a gargle for her throat, which is so dreadful bad. George fetched some bramble tops, and I've made some bramble tea, which he will carry up presently, with this, to Miss Eveleen, and she is going to beat some honey into the tea with a spoonful of myrrh wine. It's the best gargle there is for a sore throat."

"Ah! Miss Eveleen! she has no right to take my office out of my hands," said Mrs. Herbert, trying to be as menacing in her manner as the pleasant expression of her good looking countenance would allow; "though I don't think I should find much fault with her if she cured all my patients, under my very nose."

"I think Dr. Ashly would have as good a right to be jealous of you, ma'am," answered Mrs. Preston, as she put the honey-comb on a fresh cabbage leaf, lining a small basket. "When my Susan had the measles, you did more to bring her through than Dr. Ashly; and when the whooping cough was so bad about, he didn't say nothing to you for doctoring and curing them all as you did."

"Dr. Ashly and I are very good friends, I am glad to say. He never grudges me my medical fees, as he calls the money I have given to me for *my patients,—for then* he knows he can have wine

and arrow root for his patients whenever he wants it. But I came to ask you, Mrs. Preston, whether your Susan had time to make half-a-dozen shirts, out of school hours."

"Thank you kindly, ma'am," said Mrs. Preston, "I should say she could make them very well, if you were not in no particular hurry for them. Though for the matter o' that, she's only to get up an hour or two earlier every morning, and never let her hands cross before her for want o' something to do. I fancy that late rising and lost minutes in the day have a deal to do with the 'no time' excuse one hears so often."

"True enough, Mrs. Preston; I don't think you are likely to lose your time either way. Five o'clock is your time for getting up, is it not?"

"Yes, ma'am, I am generally about at that time. I like to get a good start in the morning. It's of no use running about all day to catch up the hours you've lost in the morning. You lose a deal o' time looking after them as you never find."

"It would be a good thing if everyone thought as you do, Mrs. Preston; there would be less complaints about 'no time' in the world. But you send Susan to me. She can do the shirts at her leisure —they are not particular as to time, but they are as to the work put into them. Susan will do them well if she is not hurried about them. Is she at home?"

"No ma'am; she and Jessie Ford started for school before time this morning, They had some work to carry home to Farmer Wraxall—some shirts they've been making for the men—and so they thought they would carry them round first."

"I am glad Jessie Ford is so much with Susan—it is a good thing for her. I think she is very much improved lately; she does not seem quite so thoughtless and giddy as she was. I know she is not bad at heart; only so intolerably vain. She seems to be quite aware of her pretty face—she really is very pretty."

"I am sorry for her," said Mrs. Preston; "beauty's a great snare to a young woman at any time; let alone when they're so badly looked after at home, as poor Jessie is."

"The more need for us," returned Mrs. Herbert, "to try and give her such a good training when we have the opportunity, as shall never be wholly lost, come what may to her. I am quite sure that a sound religious training in childhood is never thrown away in after life, whatever that life may be."

"I don't believe it ever is, ma'am; I have seen scores of examples where it has been the means of waking up and bringing back them as you might have thought altogether lost to all sense of good. The good seed is never thrown away; does not 'the Book' say, 'Cast thy bread on the waters, and it will *come back to thee* after many days.'"

"Ah, Mrs. Preston, I wish that Book were as much read at Mr. Ford's house as it is in yours; there would be less distress, disease, and discomfort there, than there is now. I should be more sure of Jessie had she been brought up, as your Susan has been, to read her Bible as soon as she could spell the words out, till every part of it is so familiar to her, that to hear her speak of all the persons mentioned in its pages, one would think they were people she knew personally."

"Mark has always heard them read to him, morning and evening hisself, ma'am, ever since they were so high. He always says it's the proper duty of a father to hear the children their chapter; and I must say, it do my heart good to see them stand so grave aside their father and so reverent, the little ones following each line with their tiny fingers. It's a blessed sight and it's often brought tears of joy into my eyes."

"And well it may, Mrs. Preston; children so brought up, will always be a blessing to their parents. To be early taught from such examples of faith, obedience, and reverence, trains the young mind to habits of faith, reverence, and obedience, those three most important lessons and the most difficult to learn."

"It's the only foundation, I believe, ma'am, for all learning; they who never teach their children from their earliest years to love and cherish the

and turn to it for counsel and consolation
the chances of life, have no right to expect
to be either a comfort or an honor to them
ir old age."

ere comes one I am sure will be an honor
comfort to you, Mrs. Preston, in your old
said Mrs. Herbert, as a fine lad between
and thirteen entered the garden gate. His
vas the picture of health, as he blushed,
lly taking off his cap when he saw the
s lady with his mother, and shaking back a
of shining auburn curls from his broad open
ad, he revealed a pair of large intelligent
very wells of truth in their depth and
astness.

y George," said Mrs. Preston; "God bless
she added, almost to herself.

came to bring a message to Mrs. Herbert,
he rector; and Mrs. Herbert prepared to join
asband at the place he mentioned. Before
ft Mrs. Preston's garden, she reminded her
usan was to come up that afternoon, and if
Ford came with her so much the better, as
ight find some work for her also. "If she
do it," she added.

erhaps she will, ma'am," said Mrs. Preston,
e thinks it's to oblige you. I don't know of
ing more likely to fix her steady at work than
ought of your being pleased with her."

"I am glad to hear that she values my approbation so much, Mrs. Preston; it is something to begin with, though I hope she may have a higher motive some day for doing what is right and being less volatile."

"Good influence from all around her may lead her to it, ma'am, if it be God's will," added Mrs. Preston; "I think it's a great pity we don't feel more, as God works by all sorts o' means—human as well as spiritual—we should value the influence He gives us with our fellow-creatures a deal more, besides watching over ourselves to see that it is for good and not for evil, if we thought it was only given to us to employ it for the benefit of our fellow-creatures and the glory of Him who gives us such power."

"God give me grace ever to think so, and wisdom to exert whatever influence He bestows upon me to His honor and glory," said Mrs. Herbert, in low fervent tones, her eyes filling with earnest tears as she spoke.

"I am sure, ma'am, as far as my experience goes, you have always had the most blessed influence over me and mine, ever since Mr. Herbert brought you home to this parish, and that's ten year ago come the 18th of this month. Many's the time, when I've been in sorrow of heart and distress of mind, that I've blessed the sound of *your feet* across the threshold of my door! and

ıany's the one in the village as will say the same f you!"

"Pray do not say so, Mrs. Preston," exclaimed Irs. Herbert, quickly, "you frighten me with the wful responsibility of such a power."

"It oughtn'ter to frighten you then, ma'am, who nows, no one better, that all your steps are guided, nd all the words you speak are put into your nouth. If we only do everything to the best of ur power, in a humble trusting spirit that God vill be mercifully pleased to perfect our imperfecions and make all we do and say accomplish His nds, we need never be frightened if our fellowreatures feel a comfort in us. But I beg pardon; I hadn't ought to say these things to you, who know so much better nor I do the truth of all I say."

"I don't know that, Mrs. Preston, about knowing it better; at any rate you seem to realize it more easily than I do. I suppose you would say, that a humble spirit, trusting that God will teach us how to do His work, is the very best spirit to ensure our doing it thoroughly."

"Yes, ma'am, that is what I mean; I think we need never fear we shall do or say what is hurtful to our fellow-creatures, if we trust completely to his guidance; nor ever be rash, if we feel how inable we are to do anything of ourselves."

"Thank *you kindly,* Mrs. Preston," said Mrs.

Herbert, grasping the hand of the shepherd's wi
"I felt when I saw your cheerful face, bu
amongst your bees this morning, that it would
me good, as it always does, to have a chat wi
you. May I rob your bees of some of that beau
ful lemon thyme, all in flower there. How fre
and fragrant it smells even at that distance."

Mrs. Preston hastened to gather a good handf
of the thyme, still sparkling with the dew; M
Herbert, thanking her for it with a pleasant smi
went out of the garden gate and took the ro
leading up through the village.

CHAPTER II.

---

s. PRESTON called George, who busied himself, ilst waiting for his mother, in pulling up some ›ds and otherwise tidying the already trim gar- ı. She gave him the basket to carry up to the ll, with her respectful "dooty" to Miss Eveleen. › boy departed on his errand, his mother lingered l in the garden, tying up a flower here, ling up a weed there, raking over a footstep, nming up an over luxuriant border, visiting the ly peas to see whether the flower had yet omed, and stooping over the onion bed, thinned a few to eat with the crisp lettuce which she ›rwards cut from a good sized bed of drumhead, ich she preferred to all other sorts, and which › had carefully hoed and watered till they were ıost as large as young cabbages. She was pping to tie up the clematis and honeysuckle ›r the cottage porch when she heard her kitchen

clock strike the half hour of nine, and she hur in doors to set about preparing her husba dinner.

There was plenty of time for her to do this c fully, for the cottage she now entered was as cl and bright as a new shilling; so beautiful in neatness and order, that the homely furnit looked twice as well as it otherwise would. shone with constant rubbing, till the front of old fashioned chest and drawers were almost as g reflectors as mirrors. The flower-pots in the w dow were bricked and reddened every morni and contrasted well, with their subdued but cl red, with the snow-white muslin blind, wh though of coarser texture than might have b tolerated in less tidy houses, was far preferable its spotless purity to the dingy finery which often obscures the light of heaven from the winc it disfigures.

Everything was to match in this four-roor model cottage, one of those which 'the Squ as they always called Mr. Wilmot in the vill had lately built, and let, at a moderate rent his different labourers and farm servants. (would almost have wondered how Mrs. Prest with her husband and five children to look af the last a baby in its cradle, could have maintai so much order, neatness, and regularity in her c *tage,* besides all the help she gave her husband

the garden—with all the making and mending clothes, as well as the week's washing for her family.

"We won't take in washing for anyone else," she had said to Susan; "we will make up the rent by economy in the house, and vegetables in the garden. Besides we've a plenty to do for ourselves, without doing for other people; and I've a fancy there's a more fevers carried about from house to house by that same washing, than they would like to acknowledge, who find the wash tub as good a place for gossip as ever the corners of streets, or lounging up against the doors."

Mrs. Preston had early learnt the lesson from 'the Book,' that every "wise woman buildeth her house;" so she set to work to build hers up with a zeal and fervor that brought its blessing with it. Her grave husband, her Mark, the pride and joy of her heart, always had a smile on his face as he entered his pretty neat cottage and sat down to his carefully cooked meals; and he always thanked his wife with another smile, as, having reverently said grace, his hushed children standing like true olive branches round his table, he looked in her face ere he began his food. "Truly a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband, and her price is indeed far above rubies."

It was altogether a God-fearing, God-serving house. Mark Preston was "one that ruleth well

his own house."* He felt that he was the head the family only that he might govern it accordi to the office with which God had invested hi that he might prepare the infant minds entrust to his parental care and love, to understand t parental care and love of their heavenly Fath whose representative he felt he was to the litt ones he had given to him. He trained them ca fully, bending their feelings, their conscience, a especially their wills to a filial piety, which wou make it easy for them to understand God as th heavenly Father and able to receive Him into th hearts. All their habits he so ordered that t training might be constant. Mark Preston ne sat down to his breakfast in the early morni without reading a chapter to his family, and t simple prayer, which Mr. Herbert had written f his parishioners and had given a copy, in la print, pasted on a piece of wood, to eve master of a household, for morning and eveni use. Sometimes, in the season for the you lambs, when his duty called the father out la in the evening or earlier in the morning, the mot took down 'the Book,' as she always reveren called it, and the prayer from the white-wash wall, against which it always hung on a nail, a read to her little ones before she put them i bed, and tucked them up with a warm kiss

* 1 Tim. iii, 4.

ch rosy little mouth. Besides all this, the earnest ıd constant aim of both father and mother was to ake their own conduct harmonize with the sim- .e daily prayer, which had asked that they might l lead a Christian life that day, rule their spirits, ıd their conduct be "so ordered by God's govern- ıce that they might always do that which was ghteous and sober in His sight." They both new that before they could train their own child- ›n, they must be able perfectly to train themselves, ıd subdue their wills with that perfect self- ıastery, the lordship "over all,"* with which the reator endowed man from the beginning.

It was comparatively easy for Nancy Preston to e such a notable wife and housekeeper. Her usband really was a *good* man in the best sense of ıe word. He had been most carefully trained by ›ligious parents, and his grave, though pleasant, ıeerful face, testified to the serious earnest spirit ithin him. Much alone all day with his sheep, he d a life of contemplation, and many a divine illumi- ıtion came to cheer him in his loneliness, as he sat ıere tending his sheep in the open fields, God's ›aven above him, God's sun shining on him, and ıe beauty of God's earth and its pleasantness ›und Him. He was a skilful shepherd; well ›rsed in remedies for the diseases incident to his oolly charge, but still better versed in all the pre-

* Genesis i.

cautions which would prevent any necessity f those remedies. Tall, well made, a stalwart, athlet man, no one doubted his courage, whatever th might have done at first, when Mark Preston, st a bachelor, and only a few months since come in Squire Wilmot's service, steadily refused to sit the public house drinking and smoking with t rest of the young men, or join in wrestling match or bout of single stick, or game of bowls or quoi in the bowling green of the "Chequers" of evening after work. But ever since the affray wi the poachers, in which he had saved the life the head gamekeeper, and secured the ring-lea of the poachers, (the very man who was at t head of the party at the "Chequers,") no one h cared to try the vigor of his arm. Nor did t ever more doubt his skill at quoits or bowls, w the same games were played at sheep shear hay or harvest homes, in the meadows down by clear running beck; Squire Wilmot, master of feast, looking on, and Mr. Herbert, who k everyone congregated in that field, personally, who had a kind word and a smile for each in turn.

Susan Preston was the very counterpart of mother—what Nancy Preston must have bee fifteen. She had a virgin-like countenance. light brown hair was braided back in shining ba *on her* pure forehead; her dark gray eyes w

soft and limpid, looking straight into you, and in which one could look and read the soul like an open book. There was always a smile just beaming on her face, and it broke on you as the sun through clouds, a smile of helpful sympathy and good-will. Cheerful as the lark who summoned her every morning out of bed, she bustled about the house, washed and dressed the younger children, tidied the rooms, and so helped her mother, that by the time it was nine o'clock her mother was able to say to her,—

"Now Susan, you see there is nothing left for me but to get the dinner ready, so you can go to school again to-day. The day may come when I shall be obliged to have you at home, or you may get a situation, so go and learn while you can. The teaching you get at school is of more value to you than money, besides the good influence on you of the teachers who take so much kind interest in you—all this will do you more good than you think it does now, and will tell on you by and by. If Miss Eveleen is there to-day, do not lose a word of what she may say to you. There must be a particular grace given to her, that such words of heavenly wisdom should come out of such young lips."

So Susan went to school day after day, though she was turned fourteen and so well grown and trained to all household duties by her mother, that she would *soon be fit for* any service. And a most

valuable servant she would have made to anyone who had found her out and taken her into their family. Pious, cheerful, ruling her spirit, controling her temper, a soft answer always in her mouth, reverent, obedient, anxious at all times to know what were her duties and fulfil them. Had she not been nurtured from her infancy on the lessons out of 'the Book' her parents held in such reverence?

She was a capital needlewoman. Miss Wilson, the governess of the Girl's National School, of Beckfield, prided herself on Susan's sewing, for it was she who had taken such pains to initiate her into all the mysteries of stitching, herringboning, seaming, gathering, and all the various fittings of shirt making and plain work in general. Her mother taught her to wash, starch, and iron the beautiful shirts she made, whilst Mrs. Herbert had taught her the art of cooking the plain dinner of roast and boiled, and that most difficult of all comestibles, the potato, so often spoiled by slovenly careless cooking. There was a training kitchen attached to the school, over which Mrs. Herbert presided, and many a friend at a distance had found the benefit of her teaching in the excellent cooks she had provided them with at different times. Susan had brought home to her mother the mystery of making stews and broth, and that most valuable lesson to the poor, how to make a savoury and

ntiful dish with a small piece of meat, eked out th nicely cooked and well-flavoured vegetables. Then there was George, bold, bright-eyed, frank, ıth-telling George. We have already seen him his mother's garden, politely doffing his cap to rs. Herbert, with that true courtesy inspired by verence. He was a great favorite with that dis-iminating lady, and a still greater one with her usband. Intelligent beyond his years, it was ell for him that he learnt so rapidly, and retained well the lessons he seemed to comprehend at a lance. He had not so much time to attend school s Susan. He was so useful to his father, that it as only now and then Squire Wilmot's shepherd ould spare his boy for school-hours. George had ut those few hours so well to profit, that he was uite as forward as some of those who had more me for learning. He read well, and wrote a lain, legible hand; could cast up any sum cor-ctly, and even solve a question in the Rule of hree—that most formidable looking sum to most ildren. At a very early age he used to go with s father and help him with the sheep. People ed to say, that it was because his father was so nd of this, his first boy, that he always made me excuse to have him with him. At five, six, d even seven years old, he was a perfect little odel of ruddy infantine beauty, with his well-ade rounded limbs, his close curls of brown hair,

large bright eyes, and shining forehead. Mr. Herbert used often to think of that bright, but cold March afternoon, when the setting sun was glancing full upon the gothic cross—one of those monuments of a husband's love for a peerless wife which have outlived centuries of decay, and are yet extant in the inland nooks of England to tell these latter "matter-of-fact days" of chivalrous and poetic times long since passed away.

It was situated in a nook cut out of Mr. Wilmot's park, receding in a semi-circle from the London road, overshadowed on three sides by luxuriant and lofty elms, for which this part of the county was famed. The beautiful shrine of elegant tracery supporting the cross, stood on a pedestal of some five or six stone steps, four sided as was the four arched niches above, on whose delicate trefoils the setting sun was shedding a golden light, which mellowed the old grey stone, blending it with the still, leafless trees behind it and the rich green sward on which it stood, all glowing with the same warm hues. Despite the cold east wind, tufts of sweet smelling violets grew at the foot of the pedestal, in between the joints of the stone steps, perfuming the air around with their richly scented breath. On the highest of these steps stood a child of six years old, round his neck a little tippet made of a lamb's fleece, which his mother had carefully dressed and lined,

aking of it a nice warm garment to keep the ill March winds from his chest. The strong ind had blown off his little cloth cap, and was ssing the rich brown curls from his forehead, isplaying his bright eyes flashing with excitement, his cheeks ruddy with cold and exercise. He had a little crook in his hand, with which he vas directing the sheep pressing into the park gate behind the cross, which Mark Preston was opening for them, shouting with his tiny voice directions to the well trained dog, who was barking vehemently, and coursing backwards and forwards behind the sheep that lagged, driving them gradually forward. As Mr. Herbert looked at this picture, he involuntarily thought of the infant St. John, and even remembered one picture in particular, and for which this shepherd's child might have served as a model. Even then, the child's thoughtful expression suggested a communion with the spiritual, the unseen world, that would have been incomprehensible to any but Mr. Herbert. He knew how Mark Preston had stored the boy's mind, as soon as he could understand him, with Bible knowledge. Long histories of the patriarchs and their flocks, and herds, and cattle, of the mighty deeds of the stern warriors of the hosts of Israel, had he listened to as he stood at his father's knees out in the fields and sheepfolds, where the two spent the best part of

their days. For several years he wore his l
lamb's fleece tippet; and once, an artist, who
strayed down to Beckfield in search of be
caught a glimpse of the shepherd's child
transferred him to his sketch book as a f
model.

As George grew up into a fine, well devel
boy, his father trained his body as well as his r
He soon became a skilful swimmer in the
rapid Beck, a good quoit thrower, a capital cric
and could even play a good round at single
in the meadow behind his father's house, whe
he could prevail on some of his companio
leave their usual haunt, the village green,
retiring with him to his training academy, h
quiet trial of skill away from the parade and
of the more frequented and more popular gro

George was skilful too in the art of knittin
wool, which he gathered off the hedges a
followed his father in the fields; many a p
warm socks he had made for his little brother
sisters, whose cradles he had also rocked in
turn. Nancy Preston had a knack of makin
most of her workmen as well as of her mate
Every one of her children had its appointed
in this well regulated family, and everythin
appointed use and place. When George had g
old enough to be so useful to his father as to
no more time for knitting socks or rocking cr

his mother had promoted his younger brother to hat office. And there he now sat diligently knitting the wool he had gathered and rocking the radle, as, returned from school, the young urchin at sniffing with delight the fumes of the savoury inner, which the mother had prepared for the mished nestlings now trooping from school to e home where they were so plentifully and holesomely fed. They clapped their hands with light as it was put on the table, and then gravely ood whilst their father asked a blessing on the od smoking before them, and waited patiently l, each helped in its turn, they soon cleared their atters and asked for more with silent lips but ger looks.

CHAPTER III.

JESSIE FORD came back from school with Su
Preston. She left her at the gate of the l
garden in front of the shepherd's cottage,
continued her way home to get her own din
Her father's forge was at the other end of
village, not far from the "Chequers" of obnox
notoriety, where too often the ball in the ski
ground was rolling all day, a dull irritating
intermixed with oaths and foul language.
knew that her father was to be found in
skittle-ground oftener than in his forge; hi
was to be heard there any hour of the day
in profane language; and often did he co
with unsteady gait, and reel home half-
to sleep away the precious work hou
could never be sure when he would be p
the dinner hour, and when he was, it w
such a scene of discomfort, wrangling,

igh words, that neither she, nor her mother, nor
er brothers and sisters, had much cause to be
orry when he absented himself from home.

As Jessie Ford went up the village, many a
ook of admiration from the passers by followed
er, a look she was not unconscious of, and which
luttered her heart and tinged her cheek with a
lush of pleasure. She looked so lovely in her
lack hat trimmed with velvet, in which a long
urling black feather drooped when her mother
irst brought it home for her. Jessie, however,
had taken this out herself at the joint remonstrances
f Mrs. Preston and Susan, but still more for the
vords full of love and earnest pleading of Eveleen
Vilmot. Jessie was rewarded for this sacrifice of
er vanity the next morning on her way to school.
he had met Mrs. Herbert, and as she stopped to
rop her a courtesy, the pleasant smile which
roke over that lady's face as she missed the black
eather, that token of her vanity and overweening
ove of dress, was far more acceptable to Jessie,
han the grave sorrowful look she had given her
he first day she had seen her in her new hat.
essie had something so winning in her face, that
very one seemed to love her instinctively. Despite
er vanity, every one took an interest in her; for
e had an affectionate heart and docile disposition.
ow cruelly her loveable nature was perverted by
er bad training at home, Mrs. Herbert knew and

Eveleen Wilmot, and they renewed their efforts to counterbalance the pernicious effects of such a training, by careful remonstrance, affectionate counsel, and lessons of godly love and fear.

She was a goodly flower to look at. Not yet fifteen, she was tall for her age, and slender, with a graceful figure. Her eyes, of a deep, velvety, impassioned brown, had a depth and power of affection in them, which fascinated all who looked into them. Her glossy brown hair was parted into clusters of silky curls over a fair smooth forehead, whilst the pencilled arch of her well-defined eyebrows relieved by contrast the purity of her fresh fair cheek. Her smile was peculiarly sweet and winning; her mouth, rosy, fresh, and well-cut, displayed a set of small teeth of a dazzling whiteness. Her colour came and went under the transparent skin, and each emotion of her heart betrayed itself in her countenance, itself a mirror to reflect in an instant each expression of those who noticed or spoke to her.

The care which her teachers bestowed on her training had kept one so easily moulded as Jessie from the contamination of the untidy home she now entered. Her affection for Susan Preston had kept her steady at school. She liked to go because Susan went; otherwise she would have long since left it; not to go out to service, for her mother said she had no need to soil her hands with coarse

:k, but merely because she was older than any the girls at school, except Susan. The reasons ich kept the shepherd's daughter there were of ery much higher nature, still it was a blessing ıt anything should induce Jessie to remain thin the reach of the good influence of Mrs. ırbert and Eveleen Wilmot, who regularly ıited the schools, and taught there; Susan Preston d Jessie Ford being especially in the class releen Wilmot taught herself, Mrs. Herbert ercising a more general superintendence over e whole.

As usual, Jessie found her mother behindhand . everything. Not only was the dinner not ready, ıt nothing being in its place, nothing was to be und when she wanted it. Mrs. Ford fretted, and rumbled, and scolded the inanimate things she as using, as if it was everyone's fault but her wn that she could not get the dinner on the table efore the entrance of her husband, whose voice as heard as he came from the forge, enquiring ith an oath, how long he was to be kept waiting.

Edmund Ford, a lad about the age of George reston, looked at his sister Jessie in a sort of alf deprecating, half disgusted manner, and vented is impatience by tearing off the blue silk necktie e had been trying to adjust with greater nicety efore the glass hanging up in the parlour, where ıe dinner table was prepared. Not a very

inviting sight, with its dirty table cloth all stained and crumpled, and where the plates, knives, forks, spoons, and salt cellars, were all jumbled together in the most unseemly way.

When the father came in, all begrimed with the work of the forge, for he had not even taken the trouble to wash his hands or his face, what a volley of intemperate language followed the discovery that the dinner, for which, for a wonder, he had been working all the morning, was not yet ready. When at last it did come in, and he had sat down to it, no blessing did he ask on the food, every morsel of which he put into his mouth with abuse of the wife, whose careless and hurried cookery had rendered it almost unfit for pigs, "let alone a man who had been at work all the morning."

"It's no wonder it's tasteless to you, who burn your mouth up all day with hot liquor, always at the 'Chequers,'" retorted his wife, flushed with her work and more with the flurry of the last moment. She had certainly made an attempt to wash her face before she sat down to dinner, but as she had wiped it with the apron she had worn during her work, it bore unmistakable marks of the saucepans she had been using.

"And no wonder I'm always at the 'Chequers'," growled back her husband, "at any rate it's a more comfortable place than this beastly pig-stye," he added, looking round at the untidy slatternly

›m; "and one does want a drop of something onger than usual to prevent such a mess as this ›m making you ill. Why don't you cook it tter?"

"You should give me something better to cook with then," answered his wife; "but you don't ink of no one but yourself, and spend all the oney you earn on yourself, for drink."

"Say, rather, you spend all the money I earn ith downright hard labour on waste and extravaance; a pampering of your children's vanity and ›ve o' dress. Just look at that girl how she's ressed out, and that boy too, it's all your conounded doings."

"And why shouldn't they be dressed, both of hem, so as to be a pride to them as owns them? 'essie ought to be well dressed, with such a pretty ace, and I don't know what Edmund has done hat he shouldn't have clothes that will make him ook what he is, a sight better than any of the ›oys about, who are not anything so good looking r as clever as he."

"Curse your folly and vanity," exclaimed the rritated husband; "see if they don't both of them ›ring you to disgrace and ruin, and serve you right oo, for bringing them up as you are doing. But I ıave had enough of this," he added, pushing away ıis plate, and getting up from the table, "I'm going o the 'Chequers' to see if I can't get a bit of

something fit to eat; and if Mark Preston comes about those hinges, you may tell him where he'll find me, and you may tell him too, as it were your own doings as drove me to it."

This outburst of the husband's wrath would have been followed by bitter recrimination on the side of the wife, as it had so often happened before, but just as Ford was going out of the room, a feeble voice called out, "mother," "mother," and with an impatient gesture she went upstairs to see what the poor sick child wanted.

Edmund Ford looked at his sister; accustomed as they were to these outbreaks, they had as yet lost none of their terror of them. The language the father used was dreadful and might well terrify any child. Jessie went on with her dinner till her mother called her for something she wanted for the invalid child, kept upstairs at Dr. Ashly's suggestion away from the noise of this disorderly family. When they both came downstairs again, Mrs. Ford found her two other children come in, clammering for their dinner. They looked hot and dirty, as if they had been playing in the street, and the little girl had her pinafore half torn off.

Mrs. Ford proceeded to slap them both for naughty disobedient children, who would go out and play in the road when they ought to have come in to dinner, when they were told.

"*So dirty* as you are too," she continued; "I

all have to clean you both before you go back to hool, or else Mrs. Wilson will send you home, ıd I am sure I do not want the bother of looking ter you all school time. A blessed good thing ıere is a school, to take you off my hands for a w hours, I am sure I don't know what I should o if I were obliged to have you at home all day."

The children shook themselves and began eating ıeir dinner, quite unmoved with their mother's ritability or affected by her slaps, so accustomed ad they become to such treatment. When their inner was over they managed to slip out to their lay in the road again, and the careless mother ever looked after them to see that they had not isobeyed her orders. Five minutes before school me she called them in, and as they did not obey er summons as quickly as the shortness of her me demanded, she rushed out and dragged them ı, cuffing them soundly as she brought them into ıe house. After washing, or rather scrubbing, their ıces and brushing their hair, she drew the torn inafore together and fastened it with pins, and ent them off, both crying, to school, where, after ll, they arrived too late.

How different the home of the Fords to that of ıe Prestons. In the household of this last, every ord and action, regulated by pure religion, was in subjection with all gravity," obedient, yet free, ıll of love and peace; whilst in the house of the

Fords there was no ruling, guiding principle, n fear of God, no desire to serve Him in any way no thought of Him but to take His holy name in vain. There was no family prayer to assemble them all in the morning with hearts full of grateful praise, of earnest prayer for strength throughout the day, for grace that they might be guided to all goodness and kept from sin and evil. The rule, or rather misrule, of the parents was not regulated by any Christian, or God-fearing principle. Careless of the young souls committed to their charge, both father and mother saw nothing but the trouble it gave them to keep them, not in order, but from worrying them with their noise and disobedience, and so they sought in their rule of them, nothing but their own ease and convenience. They would have been pleased enough if their children could have outshone all other children in cleverness, or even in dress, and it was this feeling which induced the mother to foster Jessie's weakness for dress, a weakness she had inherited from her mother, as had also her brother Edmund, whose vanity was more offensive than his sister's because of his overweening conceit. But neither father nor mother could take the trouble it requires to give them that real superiority they desired so much for them. There was no gentle but firm authority, compelling the children to obedience as to a habit; nothing but violent command and carelessness as to whether

'as obeyed, and blows when the disobedience sed the ease of the indolent parents. What e was there that these unfortunate children ıld not be despisers of their parents, disobedient, 'ul in the present, with a crop of tares growing in their hearts of which they would reap the vest in the future.

'here was but one hope for them, and that ang even out of the very indolence of the ease-ing mother, who would rather send them to .ool than be plagued with them at home. For ı same reason she sent them regularly to Sunday ıool, especially in the afternoon, for then she d the house was quiet, and she had some chance enjoying a nap after dinner.

So true it is that out of evil God works good, ɜn out of the mother's carelessness God in His ɔdness worked out a means of hope for these ɔr children, that they should not be utterly t; and the teachers, knowing what unholy in-ences tainted their home, redoubled their care of ɜm at school, and did their best to sow good ɜd, trusting that God would not suffer it to be ıolly overgrown with the tares the parents were ıstantly sowing in their hearts.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Rev. Mr. Herbert went up the village to one of his parishioners who had been bedri for years. When he left the house, followe the blessings of the invalid, and escorted to door by the grateful wife, he directed his towards the church, to inspect some altera which were being made in the plantations ar it. The church of Lipscombe was beauti situated on the brow of a hill, rising graduall hind the village. It had not been long rest and looked quite fresh and beautiful. The cendant of the Wilmots, who now lived at hall, had undertaken this restoration solely a own expense. A first-rate architect had down from Town, and so much care and en expended, that the result had been a com success. Even the massive doors of oak, ca all round with natural foliage, testified to

irit of love and beauty which had presided over is restoration. The old painted glass had been refully preserved, and the delicate tracery of the illars and windows had been carefully picked. veleen Wilmot had not only ably seconded Mr. erbert, but it was chiefly due to her persuasions hat the squire had consented to this restoration. ot that her father required much urging, for he ad a sincere esteem for Mr. Herbert, and said he ad done so much for the spiritual good of the illage people, chiefly his own tenants, that it vas but fair he should do something to please Mr. erbert. So he "beautified," as he said, "the utside of the church," meaning, no doubt, the isible building, as the invisible building of Lipsombe was skilfully kept in repair by the Master Mason who had it in charge. Eveleen Wilmot rought an appropriate carpet back with her from own, to lay down around the altar of the holy ommunion, whilst her eldest brother, Edward, ent two oak chairs, handsomely carved and ushioned with crimson velvet, to place on each ide of the altar; and the Rev. Montague Raynam, her uncle, had at her request bestowed two andsome books for the reading desk; for which, s well as for the pulpit, the pleased churchardens, rich farmers of the parish, had given rimson velvet hangings with deep gold fringe, on hich the two Miss Wilmots, Eveleen's cousins,

worked in beautiful needlework the sacred mon
gram. Most of the villagers had brought sma
offerings, not all fit for the work, but showing th
interest the people felt in the pains taken t
"mend up," as they called it, their old churc
though, perhaps, the real reason for this manife
tation on their part, was the desire to plea
their rector. They loved and esteemed Mr. He
bert, for he had won their respect and confiden
by the ready sympathy and help they receiv
from him in all their griefs and dilemmas.
stranger would have been very favorably impress
had he entered Lipscombe church, thus decorat
and restored, during service, and had seen t
cheerful, devout, and reverential congregati
listening with rapt attention to the Word of G
read out of that handsome bible, gold inlaid,
the clear, rich tones of the dear familiar voice
their rector, or had seen every face turned up
him, as he stood in the pulpit, cheering, warni
guiding them in the right path, God's sun smili
on them, as its bright beams poured through t
ancient windows, and illumined those ancie
walls, hallowed by so many historical associatio
On how many generations of Lipscombe villag
had not that sun looked in its course, year af
year, through the centuries gone by?

The outside frame in which the church was s
added no small charm to its beauty. Large tr

formed the back ground, whilst a gravelled terrace, its sides carefully planted, ran along the front, crowning the picturesque churchyard, sweeping down the hill, and overlooking the village, and the meadows watered by the Beck lower down. Mrs. Herbert and the gardener from the rectory had superintended the planting of this terrace, and obtained great praise for their taste and energy.

It was here that Mr. Herbert found his gardener, busy carrying out some arrangements on which he and Mrs. Herbert had agreed, and whilst the rector stopped to inspect the work and listen to its details, Eveleen Wilmot came up the path leading from the hall, bringing with her some friends, who had expressed their desire to see the church, of which she had some reason to be proud.

Mr. Herbert's face brightened with a smile, as he turned to greet Eveleen Wilmot, but the smile died away when his eyes fell upon her cousin, the Rev. Basil Effingham, who also accompanied her. Not that he had any cause of personal dislike to the young curate. It was a want of sympathy between them which made it difficult to Mr. Herbert to feel the cordiality for him which he generally felt towards most people. The squire had asked Mr. Herbert to allow his nephew to help him in his duties at church during his stay at the hall, a request to which Mr. Herbert had

acceded, after some deliberation. This had brought these two gentlemen into an intimacy which had not operated in favor of the Rev. Mr. Basil, especially as the squire had told him that he could not fail to learn some good from a man whose moral influence in the village had been of so salutary a tendency. This opinion of his uncle's had by no means gratified the self-love of the young curate, who thought himself more capable of instructing Mr. Herbert, in details of church authority and discipline, than the rector was to teach him.

This did not tend to promote a good understanding between the two clergymen. Besides which Mr. Herbert was in earnest, and sought the spiritual good of the people, who looked up to him for spiritual food, and a hand to guide them in the dark mazy paths of life. Though Mr. Herbert did not think it unbecoming or unnecessary to attend to the outward walls of the church over which he was set as pastor, whilst he was labouring night and day to build up the inside walls, yet he made it a very secondary consideration; and no one who knew him would have doubted for a moment, had one process interfered in the least with the other, which he would have sacrificed. Not so the Rev. Basil; his whole soul seemed wrapped up in the outward decoration. All the time the party from the hall were inspec

he beautiful old church, he discoursed most
edly and with great unction on tesselated
nents, altar cloths, and carpets of ecclesi-
ıl design and color, wrought iron trefoils,
d wood, painted glass, crosses, croselets, and
he various materials and ornaments of a
h, to the great edification of Eveleen's com-
ns, and the still greater grating of the ears
e Rev. Mr. Herbert.

r Mr. Herbert was thinking all the time of
he had suffered on the last Sunday evening,
, yielding unwillingly to the squire's wishes,
ıd allowed Mr. Basil Effingham to preach the
on. Mr. Herbert had much reason to repent
ıg allowed him to take that part of the duty
nerally refused to anyone. He sat on thorns
hole three-quarters of an hour the discourse
l, grieving in his heart to hear such chaff
ı to his people, hungering after the living
l. And when the young curate crowned all
unching forth into an exposition on apos-
l succession and the spiritual authority the
y derived from that source, Mr. Herbert could
ely control the deep vexation it gave him to
such things preached to the people, instead
e practical lessons of the gospel of peace,
ı he had so long accustomed them to expect
that pulpit.

rove your succession from the apostles," said

Mr. Herbert to the amazed young curate vestry after the service; "not by any assu of spiritual authority, but by the degree in you show you have inherited their power o ning souls to Christ. Gain spiritual in over the people whom you wish to guide ually, by your own earnestness and the i you take in their welfare. They will so whether you really feel that affection for which can alone entitle you to a spiritual in over them. They will yield to one so ob whereas they will sturdily refuse it to a cl serted in such terms and on such a prete the pulpit."

"But we are entitled to the most i obedience of the flock over which we a by virtue of our office, Mr. Herbert; by the of the Holy Ghost given to us by the layin hands."

For an instant Mr. Herbert turned awa the young curate, as if in utter despair of him understand him. But rousing himse sublime effort of self-conquest, he answ tones of earnest remonstrance.

"By virtue of our office, a terrible respon rests on our heads. Our Master exacts f by that very virtue, that we give wholesome the sheep He has given us to feed, that we *tend His* lambs and gather them into H

not terrify them from it, and tyrannise over them. By virtue of our office we become His servants to do His work, to save the sheep from spiritual death, to rescue them from the jaws of the roaring lion, devouring even the fairest and brightest of Christ's lambs; not to make spiritual slaves of them, for our own glorification and lust of supremacy. If we fail to follow humbly in the steps of our blessed Master, to rescue, as he did, precious souls from perdition; if we fail to prove, "by our capacity to preach His gospel, and that only," that the laying on of hands did really endue us with the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our office into disrepute, and give occasion to the impious and scoffers to revile and blaspheme our Master."

The Rev. Basil's face flushed scarlet, and his eye kindled. He felt the rebuke in his inmost heart, and all his soul rose in arms against the man who so addressed him.

"That may be all very true, Mr. Herbert," he replied, "but you must remember that I have been brought up in a school whose teaching is not so lax as the teaching of a few years ago." He dared not say of the school in which you were brought up. "Apostolical authority must be enforced; and I do not see that any other cause than the non-enforcement of such authority, and of a *wholesome church* discipline, on a rebellious, self

reliant laity, is at the root of the present shocking immorality which prevails everywhere."

"I am sorry you should be so blind," was Mr. Herbert's rejoinder, as he turned away, convinced of the utter uselessness of any attempt to speak reason to a man whose ideas were so perverted. Besides, as Mr. Herbert said to himself, he was not his curate, only a visitor, helping him by sufferance and courtesy; and he should take care that no new entreaties of the squire should give the Rev. Mr. Basil another opportunity of distracting the minds of the people he loved with such an unlovely doctrine.

On his side, the Rev. Mr. Basil thought that he owed no obedience to Mr. Herbert, as he was not his rector. Consequently he rebelled against the spiritual rebuke he had so richly deserved. His whole demeanour towards the rector of Lipscombe showed a spirit of defiance strong within him, and Mr. Herbert smiled to himself as he thought how true it was, that those alone were fit to rule who had first learnt to practise humility, obedience, and self-abnegation.

The young curate fought rather shy of any further open challenge of Mr. Herbert's opinions. He directed all his observations that morning chiefly to two of the ladies of the party, who *seemed* quite entranced with all he said, and *treasured* all his observations as the very essence

of orthodoxy. To these he was expressing his surprise that several matters he deemed most important in the service of the church should have been altogether neglected; and he then went on to tell his listeners how much had been effected in the church he had lately left in the way of candles on the altar, a crucifix and a censor which had figured in the services and procession of Ascension Day,* in which he had joined.

"Mr. Herbert would certainly be the very last person to allow such innovations as these to be introduced into our church," observed Eveleen Wilmot. "Even lesser causes of aggravation, alterations he might deem necessary, he would scrupulously avoid, rather than afford occasion for scandal to the least of those committed to his spiritual charge."

"Oh, of course, if you are going to consult the laity as to what they approve or disapprove, said the Rev. Mr. Basil, there will be no end of caviling at the slightest change. The only way to manage these affairs is to take the upper hand with the people and stand your ground, and assert the spiritual authority. A little firmness will soon compel them into submission. Of course there are always some it is impossible to subdue, but they can leave the church if they do not like it."

* See the "Times" of May, on the observances of the 14th May *at two churches in Suffolk.*

"The Dissenters have increased their congregations very much in your late parish, have they not, Mr. Effingham?" asked Mr. Herbert very quietly. There was but one Dissenting chapel when Mr. Forth became rector of Linstock, and now I believe there are four or five. One built for the Baptists only lately, I think."

"The young curate bit his lip and looked excessively annoyed at this pertinent question. He turned away from such an antagonist as Mr. Herbert, muttering something between his teeth, "that he thought those people who were always in opposition to church authority, were better out of the church than in, and it was no fault but their own if they were guilty of schism."

"I am sorry for you," was again Mr. Herbert's quiet reply. But this time his voice was veiled with emotion, and his large grey eyes met those of the Rev. Mr. Basil Effingham with a mingled look of pity, sorrow, and compassion, which sent an electric thrill of shame to the heart of the young curate. It made him turn away abashed, and rendered him for the moment silent.

As the party descended into the village to look at the model cottages the squire had built for his tenants, and the schools, Eveleen's especial province, they were met by a little child, almost an infant. Mr. Herbert was in front, explaining to one of the ladies walking beside him all the new

improvements. The little child went straight up to him, and raising her clean, shining face towards him, delight and affection beaming from her eyes, dropped a pretty courtesy to him, her rosy little mouth opening in a smile, showing all her little pearly teeth. Mr. Herbert patted her cheek, and speaking a few kind words to her, passed on.

"How very well your children are trained," said the Rev. Mr. Basil to his cousin, beside whom he now found himself walking. "They are in general so impudent and rough. I know that with us we never could teach them the propriety of a bow or a courtesy to the clergyman as he passed. How do you manage it here, Eveleen; it must have cost a great deal of trouble and patience to drill them to it?"

"It cost neither," she returned; "their reverence for Mr. Herbert is the result of their affection for him. They feel that he loves them, and knows them all. Besides which they hear their fathers and mothers always speak of Mr. Herbert in such a way that they have early learnt to respect him truly."

"Pshaw! love! I don't believe in the love of children for anyone except their father and mother, and their love for them is only what I have heard you call cupboard love, Eveleen. They find they get all they have from them, and I think the generality of people like those best who are doing or

have done something for them. As for children, they are the most selfish little beings that ever existed; I never could bring myself to love them, self-willed, disobedient, self-seeking as they are, and I never yet found one who cared a bit for me, and for the simple reason that I would never buy their affection at any price."

"I am not surprised that they do not love you," answered Eveleen, "if that is the opinion you have formed of them. They are quick-witted little things, and they know almost by intuition those who are fond of them. But I deny that children only love those who indulge them and give way to them; I think children, as a rule, do not love those who are so weak as to give in to all their caprices. They are more discriminating than you imagine. They love those best who correct them with love, and deny them for their own good. You should see how fond the children in the school-room are of Mrs. Herbert, and yet she always exacts the work she expects from them, and never allows them to be negligent or idle."

Eveleen might have said with truth, see how fond the girls in the school-room are of me. For they quite worshipped the ground on which she trod. The girls of her class in the Sunday school felt their young hearts beat quicker as their loved teacher drew near, and sitting down close to them *poured* out of her full heart, lessons of love and

meekness with sobriety and a quiet spirit. But Mr. Basil Effingham had not the gift of seeing the inward through the outward life, and only thought that his cousin had grown most abominably dictatorial since he had last seen her. How could she do otherwise, he thought, with Mr. Herbert for her spiritual director?

As he turned pettishly away Jessie Ford met him, as she came down the village. The blush which overspread her face as she saw the party from the Hall made her look prettier than ever, and the native grace with which she courtesied to Mr. Herbert and the ladies attracted the attention of the latter, no less than the modest droop of her eyes and the evident timidity of her demeanor.

"What a very pretty girl," said one of the party, as Jessie passed on, thinking to herself how beautifully the ladies were dressed, and how much she would like to be a grand lady like them herself.

CHAPTER V.

MANY a young clergymen has asked and will ask again, how men like Mr. Herbert gain such an influence in course of time as to become the ruling, guiding spirit of the parish over which they are set. Even Squire Wilmot acknowledged his power of mind. He would say, "I never knew such a fellow as Herbert, everyone believes his word to be gospel; it's no use arguing the point with him; if he once takes it into his head he wants anything done, done it will be. He has such a power of persuading you, of putting his reasons so quietly, that you are obliged to listen to him, and then I defy anyone not to acknowledge that he is right. I should like to know his secret of getting his own way like that."

In the first place, Mr. Herbert took care to be *always* right. This he could not effect without the exercise of much patient thought and delib-

erate judgment. And then he was so thoroughly unselfish. No one could ever trace the remotest shade of self-interest in anything which he did. It was for the good of others only that he worked, and he had made himself so thoroughly acquainted with every individual under his care, that he seemed to know their different natures, their trials, their temptations, all their wants, spiritual and temporal, better than they did themselves. Gifted with a more than usual share of common sense, his advice was invaluable, and all his plans, not only feasible but the very thing wanted at the time. He was also a good man of business, rather an uncommon quality in one so thoroughly the scholar as he was. As he felt that a clergyman ought to be able to enter in some degree into every question on which his parishioners might ask him for counsel, that is if he really wished to retain influence with them, without which his office was a mere sinecure, he made it a point to gain exact business ideas on everything likely to come within his province. He was never inaccessible at any hour to the poorest of his parishioners, his ear was ever open to their sorrows or dilemmas, his heart ever ready to sympathise, his head ever ready to advise, his hand to help. He was also a very industrious man. He was ever at work in some way or other, and it was astonishing what a quantity of work he would get through in a day

He visited the sick regularly, never failed t
himself at least once a day in the schools
he always reminded the children of the
class which he held twice a week in h
house, and invited by name all those wh
old enough to attend them to be sure to b
punctually, lest they should lose some info
they would be sorry afterwards not to have
He had a beautiful and well-cultivated vo
soon after he came to the living he insti
singing class. It was thought an hon
reward to be allowed to belong to that cla
to go up every Friday to the rectory to
the chants for the following Sunday. Mr. J
led the singers, whilst Eveleen Wilmot an
Herbert took it in turns to play the organ
drawing-room. No one had asked the sin
be particular and come neatly dressed, b
evident care they bestowed on their p
appearance after the few first singing m
told wonders of the influence on them
atmosphere of refinement which prevailed
Herbert's drawing-room, his courteous bel
and the extreme simplicity and good t
which Eveleen Wilmot and Mrs. Herber
dressed. A marked change took place e
the manners of the singers. They all
down and became courteous and amiable
another; no petty jealousies, no mean strife

to destroy the unanimity of the class; but all went on with an amenity which would have been surprising to those who did not know the force of example and the influence of a quiet spirit.

Then Mr. Herbert was thoroughly in earnest. When his name appeared first on the list of successful candidates at the University where he graduated, whilst everyone was saying it was only what they expected of one who had shown such evident signs of mental power, and had worked so conscientiously, young Herbert was locked in his room, thrown back in his chair, his eyes shut, his hands clasped, inwardly thanking God for the gifts He had bestowed on him, thereby fitting him for His service to which he had vowed from his youth upwards to devote himself. Not because he thought, as so many do who enter the church, of the superiority of position they thus acquired, in their own opinion, over every other position in the social scale, but in order that he might labour in the vineyard of God, train the young, guide the old, rescue those who fell, bring back to the fold the sheep who had strayed, cast out the devils that possess, men ruled by their own passions. Such was the work Mr. Herbert proposed to himself, and such was the work in which all his mental and bodily faculties had been employed for the whole twenty years that had elapsed since he had first become a deacon, till now that

he found himself Rector of Lipscombe. If one of the souls under his charge fell away, Mr. Herbert felt it as a personal grief, as if some remissness on his part had caused this desertion. He had no peace till he "had found the sheep that was lost," and brought it back to the fold in his charge; and he hardly ever failed to accomplish this, so winning were his ways, so persuasive his low, calm, earnest voice, such longings for a holier, purer life did his exhortations arouse in the hearts of his listeners. He never took "no" for an answer; nor despaired of success, even when repeated failure would have daunted men who had not his faith in the righteousness of his cause, but persevered in his labour of love, whatever it was, confident, that if it were his Master's good pleasure that he should succeed, He would not fail to crown his efforts with success, even at the last.

When he first came to Lipscombe, he found the village distracted with schism and torn by dissension. Little by little all this yielded before him, and those who had left the fold of the Church because of the faithless shepherds who neglected their duty, came back again when they found Mr. Herbert obey to the letter the charge his Master had given to him, as he did to St. Peter of old, a command always ringing in his ears, "Feed my sheep." Besides which, Mr. Herbert, whilst he wished that those born in the church should

remain in the church, was not so intolerant as to think that the gospel, if preached in a dissenting chapel, lost its healing power. He never held those up to scorn who went to listen to those holy precepts in a Salem or a Zion chapel, or believed that there would be small chapelries or separate places in heaven for various sects; because he knew that it was not the denomination which made the true Christian, but the following the blessed example of godly life, which the Lord came to set us all upon earth, and practising His holy lessons. He believed most truly that all were faithful shepherds who earnestly laboured to save souls, to cast out devils, to till the vineyard of God, no matter to what sect they belonged, if they "preached the gospel to the poor, proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, bound up the broken-hearted, and fetched out of the prisons of sin the captives bound in worse than fetters of iron." He honoured such fellow-labourers, recognised them as such, and felt a brotherhood with them, which he truly believed would be perfected in heaven to which all their hopes were alike directed.

Such was the rector of Lipscombe, a man who in everyway felt the responsibility of his charge, who, at all times in communion with his Master, sought to be directed by Him in everything he undertook. No wonder the village of Lipscombe was so changed from the time Mr. Herbert first

came amongst them. Causes for scandal and distress in families rarely occurred now, so frequent as they used to be formerly. Intemperance was no longer the ruin of family comfort; though the skittle-ground had still some who frequented it, men so cased in recklessness and obstinacy, that Mr. Herbert had hitherto failed to find out the point where he might grapple with and conquer them. One of these was Ford, the blacksmith. What made it more difficult to deal with him was that he was not really a bad-hearted man, seeming to agree very well in the truth of all Mr. Herbert would say to him at the time, but too careless to remember it when it would most serve him. But Mr. Herbert had not given him up, had rather redoubled his solicitude for him; indeed, all the members of that family were sources of great anxiety to him. The father and mother were so reckless, so selfishly indulgent, their bad, untidy ways had such a bad influence on the children, that his task would have seemed almost hopeless to any other man not so thoroughly convinced as Mr. Herbert of the faithfulness of the gospel promises.

He was admirably seconded in all his efforts in his work by his wife. She was the model of a clergyman's helpmate; herself the daughter of a hard-working clergyman, and one of a large family, she had been early trained in those lessons

hich are invaluable in the mistress of a village ectory, where the rector's house becomes the iodel of all his parishioners. Clever in every etail of domestic economy, skilled in the art of urning everything to the best advantage, Mrs. Ierbert enabled her husband to do more in the vay of helping his parishioners than his income vould have allowed under other circumstances. Imbued with an innate love of order and regularity, Mrs. Herbert had always plenty of spare time. This she devoted to all sorts of work in the village. She was to be found every day, at some time or other, in the girls' school, praising, scolding, urging the girls at needlework, or teaching the little ones their alphabet; or she was visiting one of the villagers who had just become a mother, helping the nurse, suggesting the latest improvements in the art of nursing the mother or treating the baby; or in the sick room of some child, with an infallible remedy to alleviate the measles, or the distress of whooping cough, nursing the little one with the same tenderness she bestowed on her own two little ones at home, whose comfort and even education she entrusted to no one else but herself. How she ever got through all she did in the course of the week was a marvel to all who do not know what can be effected by a mind in which the love of order prevails. Once a week she had the elder

girls of the school and some of the young
married women from the village to work at
home. The married women she said had th
own work to do. This she called her Dorcas cl
where they made clothes, which were given to
old people, but sold at a proper price to those w
could afford to buy them, and so save themsel
the time it would have taken to make them,
some other housewifely purpose. It was the t
mothers of large families that Mrs. Herbert m
favored in her quarterly sale of clothing; bu
she found some very poor and improvident fam
that a little assistance might help to reclaim,
relaxed her rules in their favor, and was not of
disappointed in the result of her benevole
Then she was a capital gardener, and as she loo
well after her garden, Mr. Herbert's table ne
wanted in the season for seacale, asparagus, p
strawberries, or more humble greens; nor the p
invalid he was visiting at the time, for the delic
of some fresh-gathered vegetable, or refreshm
of juicy fruit, not often within their reach.
had also two cows, and some poultry for subje
and a small dairy, where milk and eggs, cre
and butter were always forthcoming in the sto
of this notable woman. How did she manag
all? For she had not a large establishment
servants, two of these, the nurse and her m
were exclusively occupied in the nursery.

s. Herbert had found out a secret which
a mistress of a household would be glad
ssess. She always gained the affections of
ervants. She was such a kind mistress to
, really sought their comfort and welfare, and
so considerate to them, that their work was
em a labour of love, and they performed
as much as those who render an unwilling
e to an exacting master or mistress. She
d them more as if they were her own
ren than mere domestic drudges. If they
ill, she nursed them; if they were in sorrow,
onsoled them; if they did well, she praised
; if they did wrong, she remonstrated with
so earnestly, so affectionately, that they
ne so penitent with a true sorrow that they
repeated their fault.

th such servants the work of the house went
ke clockwork; and this regularity enabled
to get through more work, and to do it better,
could be accomplished where work is done
y because "it must be got through somehow."
ipscombe rectory, however, the servants not
worked willingly, but they also took an
ial pride in seeing that it was so done that
istress whose approbation they valued should
no occasion to find fault with them. They
ed in her praise as much as her blame pained

Except the nurse, Mrs. Herbert's four ser-

vants were girls from the village, and whom s
had so educated to household work, that her frien
at a distance were only too glad to be thoug
worthy of being provided with one of them. Wh
Mrs. Herbert found that the change would be
manifest advantage to the servant required of h
she made it a point to try and induce the girl
accept it; much as she would miss her services
first, she felt that such an inconvenience w
infinitely preferable to the self-reproach she wou
have felt had she more selfishly refused to pa
with her. These partings were attended wi
much pain on both sides, and many misgivings
to whether it really were for the best; and it w
noticed in the village for some time after such
parting had taken place, that Mrs. Herbert was
little irritable, and gave shorter replies than w
usual to her ordinary equable and gentle mann
But then the villagers knew that she was "frettin
as they called it, for the servant she had just lo
and anxious about the poor girl; and if M
Herbert were more irritable than usual, even
such cases, then they might be sure she had had
letter that morning from her late servant, in whi
she spoke of the kind home she had left, and h
she thought she should never meet with so goo
mistress again, said she felt very dull and stra
in her new place, but hoped to get on in time
etc.

t content with making her own servants such
ugh masters of their work, she directed some
r best efforts in the village to encourage the
and mothers to greater care and household
s. In the "kitchen" she had established,
a mother cooked her family dinner, accord-
Mrs. Herbert's advice, and the young girls
initiated into all the mysteries of baking,
rving, pickling, curing and smoking hams
acon. Susan Preston was an apt pupil in all
arts; but, notwithstanding all Mrs. Herbert's
s to induce her to come, Jessie Ford was not
to be found in the "Lipscombe Kitchen," as
s called. She told Susan it stained her hands
eadfully to pick vegetables, the saucepans,
oiled them, and she could not bear scouring
. She liked to be always well-dressed, and
ould not afford to grease her gown cooking;
oolish Mrs. Ford said the girl was quite right,
he could not think why Mrs. Herbert should
anting her Jessie to be always messing about.
would learn cooking fast enough "when the
came."

eleen Wilmot, too, helped Mr. Herbert most
ually in his labour of love. A tie of no
ion sympathy and mutual affection existed
een the rector of Lipscombe and the young
on whom the hand of affliction had already
heavily laid. At a time when her best

affections had been rudely crushed and flung b
to her, by one who afterwards disgraced the na
he bore in no common way, Eveleen Wilmot l
found in Mr. Herbert a friend, a supporte
comforter, such as few meet in their life's tri
He had shewn her the mercy of the Hand t
chastened, and had no difficulty in bringing su
a pure and deeply religious mind to see infi
wisdom and love in the blow which had at first
stunned her. When she recovered from the f
shock it had been to her, to see everything she
deeply reverenced and held most sacred, scoffed
and outraged by one she had so thoroughly trust
Mr. Herbert led her by degrees to find interest a
consolation of an enduring nature in the work
which he had devoted his own life. Not even l
Herbert's voice touched chords of response in
hearts of his listeners, as the low soft tones
Eveleen Wilmot's gentle voice, in her visits to
sick, the poor, the aged, the infirm, the mourn
for she spoke from the fulness of her own ex
rience, and taught the knowledge she had purcha
with suffering. Therefore it was that no one carr
home conviction to the hearts of her listeners
she did, of the infinite love of the Father to
bereaved and afflicted. No one could interest
young as she interested her class at school, no
influenced by her example, or became a
living precept, than the grave and quiet

ruled the hearts in that village more truly any autocrat ever ruled in virtue of his iron

How was this? where was Eveleen's s Love ruled her heart, shewed itself in a actions, flowed out in every word that escape lips. She taught others what she felt h that religion was no mere art to be acquired. taught because she knew that true religior sists in *being good* and *doing good*, and that truly religious is to become just, truthful, si self-denying, gentle, forbearing, pure in wor thought and deed. That religion is to be prac not in the closet, but in the world, that "i reforming power, which is to make lovel coarse, profane, cruel life, with its cares and te tions, its unlovely strifes, its unhallowed inter and she knew best how to teach such a rel for she practised it, every day and hour of h She knew also the cultivation best fitted tc mote the growth of such a plant as this prayer, by reading God's Word, she watere good seed sown, she taught "line upon line cept upon precept," those habits of daily denial, of resistance to temptation, which enables us to overcome at the last, of symp gentleness, humility, kindness, active benevo which are to be daily practised in our dail and daily intercourse with our fellow-crea She knew that true religion was not a cor

poring over "good books," not even regular tendance at church, nor ordinances, not e prayer only; but that it was the constant glo cation of God in the midst of all the hard tri the fierce conflicts, the stern duties of life, guiding our course amidst rocks of temptation currents of trials, "by the starlight of duty the compass of divine truth; bearing oursel manfully, wisely, courageously, for the honor Christ, our Great Leader, in the battle of li She taught because she knew from experience, t religion is the one guiding influence over all actions, from the greatest to the least, and that field in which it is to be practised is the fiel our everyday life, and that it consists not so m in "doing spiritual or sacred acts, as in d secular acts from a sacred and spiritual motive

Was it a wonder that the village of Lipsco betrayed in its everyday life the influence of t three spirits, ever active in the midst of Whether it was the tall and well-proportic form of the rector, walking up the street, thought seated on his intellectual forehead as throne, his calm grey eye reflecting his undau and truthful spirit; or Mrs. Herbert, with qu energetic step, fire in her eye, a righteous in nation of wrong and injustice, tempered motherly love and tender pity; stopping to soo the crying child with gentle, tender words, fro

heart melting with love; or reproving the truant from school, with a mild but firm rebuke; shaming the untidy girl with unwashed face or "unkempt locks;" or the gentle, brown-eyed, Eveleen Wilmot, gliding with the step and demeanor of an angel of purity and love, from door to door; under whose tender feet the violet sent forth a richer perfume; before whose presence the honeysuckle, the hedge-rose, wafted a fragrance of more than earthly sweetness; to whose ear the happy birds carolled a fuller, more joyous song; before whom the trees bent with a more lowly reverence. Well might the spirits of darkness, and evil, and falsehood, cower, and mutter, and mope before the presence of these soldiers of the Most High, consecrated Knights of the Cross; well might they fly before the glitter of swords of such a temper as those they wielded, even if in their very obstinacy they still held their ground, and came back again and again to renew their unholy work.

CHAPTER VI.

It was an unusual thing to see a cloud on sunny face of George Preston. But there v slight one on it as he went to school one b morning in July. His father was gone to some sheep given to the Squire by a p ular friend who had brought them from Zealand. They were to have been sent dow railway; but Mr. Wilmot thought it woul best for his shepherd to go and fetch them l as they were a particular breed newly introd and it was expected the wool would be very improved by this change of climate. So Preston was to go to Knoxtown to fetch t a journey of about four days, there and George was very anxious to go with his fa but as there were only four sheep to home, there was no excuse, his mother th to take him away from school for so

days, when it was so seldom he could be spared to go. Besides, she did not quite like the idea of the boy's going so far from home as yet; and there was a large market town where Preston had to look out for some more sheep, to be sent to a farm Squire Wilmot had in Shropshire; and neither she nor his father cared that George should be in such scenes as a market town was likely to furnish during the cattle show which took place there at that time. Now it was this very cattle show George wanted to see. He had never been to such a thing, and he thought what most boys of his age would have thought, that it was a much pleasanter thing than it really was. He did not like it when he was decidedly told he was not to think of it. His mother, however, talked to him so kindly about it, told him so plainly that this was one of the opportunities life offered to prove his submission to those who knew what was best for him, and to exercise self-denial, that George began to feel quite ashamed of himself, that he could not see his father go off next morning at four o'clock without a still lurking feeling of its being very hard he might not go with him. His mother told him afterwards, that it was just these sort of little trials which are hardest to bear; a greater trial seems to nerve one to the occasion, and call forth energies to meet it, which do not seem to be roused by the minor contradictions of life. After break

fast, however, he had almost recovered his serenit and went off to school with a lighter heart th he had thought possible the evening before. Ar then it was true he could now play in the crick match, which was to come off in one of the Squir meadows next day; and as he was a go player, he expected to make a very good sco perhaps bear away all the laurels of the matc This helped to console him a little, and he beg to look brighter. As he was going along the ro overshadowed with tall trees, hanging over son palings, fencing in some meadows belonging farmer Waxsall, one of Squire Wilmot's tenan Edmund Ford overtook him, out of breath wi his endeavours to join him. He said he had be stopped by Mrs. Smith to give him a note for M Wright, the schoolmaster. He took it out of h pocket and shewed it to George Preston, and p it back in one of his books, which he opened f the purpose.

"You will drop it," said George.

"No, I shan't," he answered; "it's better the I should not wonder if I forgot it if I left it my pocket."

"There goes Mr. Herbert's pony chaise up fr the stables," said George. "I suppose he's goi by the ten o'clock train, then."

"Where is he going?" asked his companion.

"He and Mrs. Herbert are going to see M

Herbert's brother, who is very ill," said George. "She did tell mother where it was, but I forget; it was a good way off, I know."

"They won't have much time to spare," remarked Edmund; "it only wants five minutes to nine now," he added, looking at the church clock as he spoke; "and it's a good six miles to the station."

"Oh, they'll do it easy enough," George answered. "The pony is a good'un to trot."

"What beautiful cherries!" exclaimed Edmund Ford, as they passed an orchard belonging to the same farm as the meadows; "I must just have a bunch."

"You had better leave farmer Waxsall's cherries alone," said George. "I should'nt like to be in your shoes if he caught you; besides, you know we ought not to take anything that don't belong to us."

"Oh, bother preaching," said Edmund; "what's the harm of a cherry or two? I dare say he won't miss them; and supposing he does, I dare say the blackbirds can bear the blame."

"Well, I shan't stay to see you take them," said George; "you'd much better come on, Ford; we shall be late for school, and then we shall have a bad mark."

But Edmund was determined to have the cherries, out of contradiction to George quite as

much as because he wanted them. Though the two were very good friends, and both of them good-natured, Edmund Ford's vanity was hurt to feel George's superiority to himself at every turn. So he jumped up to catch hold of the branch hanging over the road, and which was higher than he had at first thought.

"There goes my book over the palings, I declare," he exclaimed, as one of his books flew out of the strap in which he was carrying it. "Now I must go over and fetch it; do come and help me, George."

"No, that I'm sure I shan't," cried George, "for there goes nine o'clock; you must get it out yourself; I don't mean to have a bad mark and black looks from master, which is worse."

"You shan't be better off than I am," said Edmund, as he snatched George's cap off his head and tossed it over the palings after the book.

"I shan't go after it," said George; "you may bring it out with your book," he added, as he ran off full speed to school.

"That I'm sure I shan't," said Edmund Ford, vexed beyond measure at his own folly and George Preston's escape. He scrambled over the palings, and picking up his book, turned to go back the way he came.

He did not know that farmer Waxsall was not

far off in the orchard, and caught sight of him just as he rose from picking up the book.

"Stop, stop! you young thief!" shouted the farmer, not best pleased to see a boy in his orchard just as his cherries were fit to gather.

The sound of farmer Waxsall's voice quickened Ford's movements considerably, and he scrambled as he best could over the palings, heedless of the nail which tore the leg of his trowsers, and kept the piece hanging to it. Edmund jumped down into the road and ran off at his utmost speed towards the school.

"Why, that was Edmund Ford jumping into the road," said Mr. Herbert to his wife, as they drove past on their way to the station. "I hope he has not been stealing Mr. Waxsall's cherries."

"I should not wonder," said Mrs. Herbert; "he is just the one to do anything of that sort with such home example as he has."

"Well; but I never knew Ford steal," said Mr. Herbert.

"No; but there is too much recklessness and indolence in that house, for them to trouble themselves much as to the marked distinction between right and wrong. They have some vague notion about it, I believe, but nothing more."

"The parents have much to answer for, I fear," said Mr. Herbert, as they drove on. Meanwhile, Edmund Ford was obliged to stop before he reached

the school. He had just seen that his trowsers were all green, and he began to brush them with his handkerchief. This short delay gave him time to recover breath and smooth back his hair under his cap. "What shall I say for being so late?" he said to himself; "oh! Mrs. Smith's note!" and then he found that it was no longer in the book where he had put it. It was impossible to go back and look for it now, he thought, especially as Mr. Waxsall had seen him and would no doubt catch him if he went back then. He was in despair about it, he could hardly go back and look for it at all; no doubt the orchard would be watched now, perhaps even traps set. He had nothing for it but to go into school, which he did, abusing his ill-luck, when it was his own folly which he should have blamed for the dilemma he was now in.

The delay of brushing his trowsers had given time for farmer Waxsall to arrive at the school before him; and through the diversion of his angry complaint to the master, gave Edmund the opportunity of quietly taking his place amongst his companions, unnoticed by Mr. Wright. Still his heart sank within him lest Mr. Waxsall should have recognised him; and yet he thought he could not have had time to do so, as he must have been more than half-way over the palings before he called out to him. He soon perceived that he was not suspected of being the culprit, for he saw Mr.

ll shewing poor George's cap to Mr. Wright,
ard him say where he had picked it up.
d Ford was not at heart a bad boy, and
oment he determined to go up boldly and
all, but his courage failed him, and then
me and punishment that might follow such
ssion was too dreadful to be thought of.
aw you come running into school, breathless
thout your cap, George," said the master to
or boy, whom he had called up from his
and who now stood overwhelmed with dis-
see the turn this affair had taken.
w do you account for your cap being in the
l, then," asked the master of him, "if you
aving been in yourself?"
ge was silent; he could defend himself if
ully accused, but his mind was too noble
lpate himself by meanly accusing another.
ped, too, that Edmund Ford would confess
happened. He knew that he should in his

sides, you were the only one absent when I
lling the names," resumed the master, as he
ed over the circumstances of the morning;
ast, I think so. But I may not have quite
d them because you came in, Mr. Waxsall,"
d, turning to the farmer; "but I think I
ssed your name. Oh yes, there is a mark
it," he added, looking at the school register;

"and there is Smith, is he here?" he continued, looking round the school.

"Please, sir, he's got the measles;" shouted two or three boys at once.

"I wonder Mrs. Smith did not send me word," said the master; "she generally does if she is obliged to keep the boy from school. Oh! there is Ford I have not marked; where is Ford?"

George's face brightened as he heard Ford's name called. "Now he must answer; now he will tell how it all happened," he thought. "Now he will say that it was not I who was in the orchard;" and he turned confidently round to the place where Ford sat, and looked eagerly and appealingly at him.

"Ford's here, sir;" said three or four boys at once. The excitement of the affair was irresistable, and a very welcome digression from the usual routine of lessons.

"Were you here when I began to call the names?" asked the master. "I don't remember seeing you in your place."

"Yes, sir; Ford was here," shouted the same voices; forgetting, in their eagerness to help to clear up the affair, that they were asserting a thing for which it was impossible they could answer, as they none of them had noticed whether he were absent or not.

"I believe he was here," said the master;

t let him answer for himself. Yes or no, l?"

eorge saw that he had nothing to hope for in quarter. Ford's eye fell, and his face grew as he stammered out, "Yes, sir!" as he best d, in answer to this direct question from his ter.

I know it was George Preston," said the ex- l Mr. Waxsall, with emphasis. He was ving irritated by the difficulty of fixing on culprit at once, notwithstanding the over- lming proofs which he thought would have led the point without any debate. "Here's cap; he owns to that;" he added, scornfully gnant. "I found it in my orchard, where he ped it in his hurry to escape; you saw him e running into school breathless and without He's the only one absent from school at the , and yet in the face of all these proofs, you tate to say that he was the boy who was ling my cherries and breaking down my ng fruit trees. I don't understand such shilly lying, Mr. Wright, and that's my opinion!"

I am afraid, George Preston, that the proofs against you," said Mr. Wright, in a voice which ayed the grief it was to him to be obliged to pro- nce a verdict of guilty on a boy whom he thought new so thoroughly, and whom he could have ted, as the saying is, with untold gold.

"Please, sir, I was not in Mr. Waxsall's orchard this morning, I wish you would believe me, sir, indeed I do;" pleaded poor George, the tears starting into his eyes.

"He's a liar and a hypocrite, as well as a thief," shouted Mr. Waxsall, furious with the boy's reiterated assertions of his innocence.

The spirit of wrath, which had now full possession of Mr. Waxsall's heart, roused, as it always will, the same spirit in the heart of the person on whom he let his passion loose. The boy's face flushed a deep crimson, and he turned in an instant on Mr. Waxsall. A look of undisguised hatred, indignation, and defiance flashed from his eyes full into the farmer's face.

"What a precious young devil;" said Mr. Waxsall, in a tone half of scorn half of repressed rage. He would have been rather surprised had he been told that it was he who had roused that devil now in fierce possession of that poor child's heart.

"George, I am ashamed of you," said his master, as he saw the look as it flashed out. "Go into the class room, sir, I will see Mr. Herbert, and know what I am to do with you."

"Do with him!" exclaimed the infuriated farmer, "give him a confounded good flogging; if you don't, I will," he continued, his wrathful eye following poor George as he went down the school

face burning, but his head high, his eyes flash-
defiance at the herd of boys pointing at him
he passed, some tittering, some muttering, all
re or less accusing him, all but one, a little
.ow, to whom George had shewn many a kind-
ıs, who caught hold of his hand as he passed him,
l putting it to his little mouth, kissed it, and
d, as well as he could through his tears, "poor
orge."

The voice of that childish woe fell like a balm
on the boy's heart, he burst into tears, and going
o the class room sank down on the ground, and
ning his head against the wall cried as if his
art would break. After a while he began to
ink a little, Mr. Herbert would be sent for, there
ıs hope for him there. Could he induce Mr.
erbert to believe him without accusing Ford?
e thought he could. Yes, Mr. Herbert would
lieve him, for he knew he never told a lie. And
en the terrible thought occurred to him that
r. Herbert was even then stepping into the train
nich was to take him away, no one knew how
r; and his father was gone. No one to take his
use, no one to protect him, no one to defend
m, no one to whom he could appeal. Would
ey send for his mother, and if they did, what
uld she do? George rolled himself on the
ound in despair, and almost shrieked aloud in
is sense of utter desolation.

After a while, the very excess of his g
seemed to make him quieter, and then came f
ings of burning indignation against Ford.
had not seen him as he passed down the schoo
his present place of banishment, leaning on
desk, his face hid in his hands, for he was
quite so dead to all sense of shame, as not to
how vile his conduct was. Yes! and why sho
he not accuse Ford? Why should he suffer
Ford's folly and wickedness? Yes; he would
how his cap came to be in Mr. Waxsall's orcha
he would let everyone know what a mean wre
Ford was; and he, he should be cleared. Wa
not dreadful to be accused of a thing of which
was so perfectly innocent?

Poor boy! what a temptation for him to strug
with, at a time when he was so weakened w
passion, so overwhelmed with his position! I
who had been so proud of the character for tru
fulness and honesty, which he had kept unsulli
to be called a thief and a liar! Oh, it was h
rible! And to think that he could turn the tab
on his accusers and point out to them, if he ch
the one who really did deserve those names.
—could he choose? What would Mr. Her
say if he did such a thing? would not his fat
be ashamed of him? would not that be worse t
stealing bushels of cherries, if to clear himself
deliberately gave up a schoolfellow to punishm

No! all the lessons ever inculcated by the teachers who had so carefully trained him, father, mother, Mr. Herbert, Eveleen Wilmot, imperatively forbade the thought. As he thought of his Sunday school teacher, the words he had so often heard from her lips rushed back to his mind, and laid the demon in his heart in one short moment. Yes! come what might, God would not abandon him, if he did not forsake God and give himself up to do that which he knew would offend Him.

And so he became quieter, and waited patiently for what would come next, though he scarcely knew himself what he hoped would turn up. He did not know what a much severer trial of his constancy awaited him, poor boy. Nor did he know how long he had remained there, so absorbed had he been in his own thoughts, and so little interest was there for him in anything which did not immediately bear on the present life of those thoughts.

Mr. Wright had intended to leave him to his own reflections till dinner time, and when the other boys were all gone home, to go in and see him without fear of interruption, and so cross-question him, that, if George really were as innocent as he protested, he might perhaps find a clue to the guilty one. He hoped that if he were guilty, George might confess to him what he was too proud to own to a stranger; one, too, who had

made such a mistake in the manner of dealing with a boy of his spirit.

But Mr. Wright's purpose, excellent as it was, was not destined to be carried out. Half an hour before dinner time, who should come into the school-room but Squire Wilmot, accompanied by his nephew, the Rev. Basil Effingham. As Mr. Waxsall followed them, there was no doubt in Mr. Wright's mind as to the reason of the visit of these gentlemen.

Squire Wilmot listened to Mr. Wright's account of what had taken place in the school, and the expression of his face plainly showed how serious he thought the case. Had the squire been ever so much inclined to enter into Mr. Wright's views, that he should be allowed to question George by himself, he would have been overruled by Mr. Waxsall's impatience and the Rev. Basil Effingham's sense of the propriety of bringing the culprit under the influence of "church discipline." As he was for the present the sole representative of the church at that moment in Lipscombe, he assumed the authority with which his position seemed to invest him, and to Mr. Waxsall's infinite satisfaction, proposed a summary punishment. But Squire Wilmot's sense of justice suggested the trial of the culprit before pronouncing sentence, though he added, that if he found him guilty, he might expect no mercy at his hands. As he was

der and supporter of the schools, and in
ıse the sole person to whom Mr. Wright
ɔonsible, the unwilling schoolmaster had
e left him, but to obey the rather peremp-
ımand to bring the unfortunate boy out
him before him, so that he might conduct
estigation in presence of the whole

ı Wilmot sat down, looking very magis-
ıd the Rev. Mr. Basil took a seat beside
king as if he considered himself sole judge
ter, by "virtue of his office," and fully
ıed to check any partial leanings in favor
ılprit, at once, and to see that a wholesome
ıtary chastisement should be inflicted on
ɔy one, to the prevention of farther crime
terror of the school, frightened, hushed,
d with the solemn looks the principal
ı the scene now assumed. Mr. Waxsall
sat down, and leaning on his stick firmly
before him, tried to compose his face to
ɜre tranquillity of the Squire and his
He did not succeed so easily as he
spite of all his efforts to subdue them, his
ıce and his irritability betrayed themselves
ountenance. He lost all command over
when poor George was led forth from the
m, and placed before the judgment seat by
ɜtant Mr. Wright.

George Preston looked at the faces of his judges, and as he met their hard scrutinizing looks, his heart became hard and dogged, and his face assumed an expression which no one could have thought his frank, pleasant, open countenance could ever have worn. To the first questions addressed to him his replies were short and decisive. The unerring instinct of the boy told him that all appeal to their sympathy and better feelings would be unavailing. He saw that they had no sympathy for him, that he was prejudged, and he felt like a hunted beast driven to bay. There was no mercy for him in the tribunal before which he was now arraigned.

"Confound the fellow, why don't you answer me, you insolent young dog," exclaimed Squire Wilmot, now losing all command of himself, when he found that George Preston would no longer open his lips to answer another word. He had said, "I have told you the truth, Sir, and if you won't believe me, I can't help it." After that not another word could they draw from the boy, proud, sullen, and fiercely indignant. Mr. Basil Effingham had tried his eloquence in vain, and was the first to suggest that, as he had so publicly defied all authority, (he might have said *my* authority,) his punishment should be public, and a sound flogging was the best remedy to be applied in a case like this. As his observations were made in a loud voice, George

heard, and though his cheek turned pale at the first mention of the fate which awaited him, he gave a short scornful laugh, as much hysterical as it was anything else.

There was no longer any hesitation with the men who had constituted themselves his judges. Justice had been defied, authority set at nought, by a daring young scoundrel who now showed himself in his true colors. In vain Mr. Wright prayed that execution of the sentence should be delayed till at least Mr. Herbert had returned. The Squire turned upon him in such a fierce mood, even taunting him with setting Mr. Herbert's judgment above his, that poor Mr. Wright bowed before the storm he was powerless to resist, and instant preparation was made for the punishment.

When all was ready the Rev. Mr. Basil improved the occasion to address the school, all its members hushed and awe-struck with this, to them, unusual display of the power of the law. Whilst poor George stood there pinioned by the arms, this representative of offended "church-dignity, authority, and discipline," strong in his right to teach the ignorant, to warn the sinner, to punish the guilty, by "virtue of his office" and "the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands," rose to the situation with a feeling of self-satisfaction, which made his voice terrible as thunder to the affrighted children, as he painted poor George Preston in

terms that would have fitly portrayed a devil in his true colors, and exhorted, warned, threatened his trembling listeners till they really did not know whether they were not all in for the same punishment which now descended so heavily on George Preston.

Not a sound broke from his lips, not even a stifled sob all the time it lasted, and when it was over and he was again on his feet, though he felt faint, sick, and giddy, with a parched mouth and burning lips, yet, when the Rev. Basil Effingham began to address him, and hoped he would take warning from his salutary punishment, he looked at him with the glare of a wild beast. He felt a burning hatred in his heart for every one concerned in his unjust punishment, and dashing to the ground the mug of water Mr. Wright had mercifully fetched for him, he set off full speed from the school, and never stopped till he reached home. Rushing past his affrighted mother, he scrambled upstairs into his own room, and, locking the door behind him, fell heavily his full length on the floor.

CHAPTER VII.

QUICK as Mrs. Preston was to follow him, the loor was shut in her face just as she reached it. In vain she shook the door; first ordered him to open t, then wildly entreated him in the most endearing terms which her mother's heart and her terror could suggest. She was still imploring him, when she heard the voice of Eveleen Wilmot beseeching her to come down. Finding that she paid no heed to her summons, Eveleen took courage, and boldly going upstairs, laid her gentle hand on Mrs. Preston's arm and led her downstairs.

The mother's indignation knew no bounds when she learnt from Eveleen's lips how her child had been treated. The mother's unerring instinct at once divined her boy's innocence. She felt all the burning injustice which had been dealt to him; and she scornfully sneered at the self-sufficiency of his self-constituted judges, and "spoke some truths" about them in her bitter anger which

those gentlemen would have scarcely liked to hear. The calm, self-possessed, motherly Nancy Preston forgot all self-control; and her terrified little ones fled into corners, and stood there trembling and crying bitterly, appalled, as they well might be, by the fury of a storm such as they had never yet witnessed.

"My George, my George, my boy, my pride, my darling," she said as her wrath exhausted herself, and all the tenderness of her heart gushed again from its natural springs. "Oh!" she went on, "if his father had only been at home they wouldn't ha' dared to lift so much as a finger on him: if Mr. Herbert had been here my boy would not have been so cruelly used." And then tears came to her relief, as if Mr. Herbert's name had been the talisman to open those unwholesome sluices of the passion-stifled heart; and, covering her head with her apron, she rocked herself backwards and forwards on her chair as she sobbed aloud.

"Lord! if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died;" said Eveleen Wilmot in a low voice, during the first pause which ensued in Mrs. Preston's agony.

"I beg pardon, Miss!" said the poor mother, rising from a chair and dropping a courtesy to Eveleen. "I hope you will excuse me, but indeed, indeed it's a sore trial."

"I think we have more need to beg pardon of you and poor George, Mrs. Preston," answered Eveleen, in her gentle tender voice. "Mr. Herbert will indeed be grieved when he comes home to find that such an outrage has taken place in his absence. But come, let us go up and see what we can do to comfort and soothe the poor boy."

All efforts to open the door were unavailing, and it was not till Mr. Ford came and removed the lock, that the mother and Eveleen Wilmot could approach George. When they entered the room, they found him still lying on the floor perfectly insensible.

By chafing his forehead with brandy and moistening his lips with it, he began to recover, and at length they got him to swallow some water, which seemed to revive him. His first impulse was to push his mother away from him, the next, to hide his face in her bosom and sob violently. His mother pressed him tenderly in her arms, whilst her tears streamed down her boy's face and mixed with his. By degrees his violent sobs grew fainter, and at last ceased. Mrs. Preston looked at him and found he was asleep, exhausted, no doubt, with the violence of emotion, restrained passion, and the pain of the punishment which he had received.

Eveleen Wilmot suggested to the mother that

he should be put to bed. During the operation of undressing him, the mother shuddered as she saw the marks of the rod on his fair skin. She laid him down on the bed, and fetched some fresh butter which she tenderly rubbed into the bruises. She said not a word, but Eveleen Wilmot, looking on silently, marked her pale cheek, her quivering lip, and asked herself what account could be rendered of this transaction, when He made inquisition of those whose prejudice and passion had so misguided them.

At first George breathed heavily, and a sob broke out every now and then, but he grew quieter by degrees, and at last slept peacefully. Eveleen stooped over the boy and kissed his pale forehead, and then sat beside the bed for another half-hour watching his slumber, whilst the mother went downstairs to give some dinner to the hungry little ones, crying as they sat round the table. They did not quite know what had happened, and this very uncertainty made it all the more terrible to them. They knew that George had been flogged, and that mother and Mary were very sorry, for they did nothing but cry and eat no dinner, and that was a total dreadful enough for them to contemplate, poor little things.

In her indignation, Mrs. Preston threatened at first to keep them all at home lest the same fate should befall them. Eveleen, however, man-

ɔd to persuade her to let them go, representing her how much quieter the house would be thout them. She would willingly have stayed ıger with Mrs. Preston, knowing how her ɜsence comforted and helped her to a whole-ne restraint of very natural feelings; but she d promised Mr. Herbert to visit some old people d read to them during his absence, and one or o of the sick. Before she left she persuaded ɜ mother to take her work upstairs and sit with ɔorge, leaving Mary to look after the house and ɜ children's tea.

"You know," she said as she left her, "that all ings work together for good to them that love ɔd. Neither you nor I can tell for what purpose ɜ has permitted this great suffering to befall ur poor boy, but of one thing we can be certain, ıt He does all things in wisdom."

Coming down, she advised Mary not to let her ther know if anyone called in the course of ɜ afternoon, fearing that some injudicious censure poor George or his judges, or some awkward npathy might rekindle the indignation but half othered in the mother's heart. It was well ɜ took these wise precautions. The Rev. Mr. ingham called just before tea, bent on such rn admonition and wise counsel for the future ɜernment of the rebellious child, as was not ɜt calculated to further that tranquillizing process

which Eveleen Wilmot was so anxious to pr
in the mother's heart. Finding that Mary
the only person he was likely to see that
noon, he delivered his priestly message to he
much inward consciousness of apostolic aut
delegated to him. As she received him alm
silence, answering his remarks and recomm
tions of a proper repentance to George, and s
injunctions to the mother to enforce a whol
discipline which would cast out the leg
devils which possessed him now, he congrat
himself as he left the house on his opportun
and was fully convinced of its salutary influe
Mary. Squire Wilmot did not think it nec
to call, and farmer Waxsall was still too mu
cited to think at all, whilst Mr. Wrigh
schoolmaster, was wise enough to keep
Mrs. Preston's way for the present. He
strange misgiving as to the real nature o
morning's proceedings.

When George, maddened with the treatm
had received, rushed out of the school-roo
Rev. Mr. Effingham lost his self-possession
moment, and allowed his wrath to get the
of his usual, but stiff, courtesy. He blame
Wright for allowing him to escape: he had
to impress George with the heinousness
conduct, and to preach his example to the s
On reflection, however, he remembered he

his first intention in a "pastoral vsit," in h he thought himself quite justified in Mr. ert's absence. The second he then and there nplished, to the great terror of most of the ing boys, still trembling at the unusual sight had witnessed. At first their sympathy had divided, some felt glad that George had at been caught tripping, for he did not always al his pride in his well-established character ruth and honesty, nor his opinions as to the -comings of his companions. Others re-bered how he had triumphed over them at et or foot-ball, and were half pleased to see humbled a little. But as farmer Waxsall's h gathered, and Squire Wilmot and Mr. gham grew more and more angry, each little ; melted towards George, remembering only niform kindness to them all, and when the shment was inflicted their hearts beat with assion mixed with terror.

e Rev. Mr. Effingham's exhortations, however, d to calm them down, from the very fact of being obliged to listen patiently, though not rstanding half he said to them. This im-sed them with a dim sense of their inferior ment, and made them feel a reproving remorse siding with George against such superior om. But when Mr. Effingham alluded to the *ow's cricket* match, and said that some one

must be found to take the place of the culprit in the Lipscombe eleven, as he should not even be allowed to appear on the ground, still less in the match, their excitement was turned in a new direction, and no more sympathy was felt for George, who was now so completely disgraced.

Farmer Waxsall, in one of whose meadows the match was to be played, brought the excitement to a crisis, by declaring his intention to provide the school with tea and cake on the ground, and an unlimited supply of cherries; in order, he said, to mark the difference between boys who helped themselves to what was not their own, and those who kept their hands off their neighbour's property.

"Dear me, Ford! how you have torn the leg of your trowsers," said Mr. Wright to Edmund Ford, as the rest of the boys, dismissed the school, ran hallooing and shouting over the green; "the piece is completely out; how could you possibly do that?"

"I am sure I don't know, sir," answered the boy, colouring deeply as he spoke; "I must ask mother to mend them."

"You had better do so," said the master, "and put on some others to come to school; those are too good to be used in that careless manner, and they are all green at the side; you should not climb trees in such clothes."

This was not the only fright that Edmund Ford had to damp his enjoyment of the grand cricket match. The next morning as he took his place in the school-room, where all the boys were to muster and go down to the field, Mr. Wright called him, saying he wanted to speak to him. Conscious of his horrible and mean cowardice, of his infamous behaviour to poor George, his heart gave a bound of fright when he heard this summons to the master's desk. Had anything come out to betray who was the real culprit? He walked up the school-room with as much unconcern as he could muster, though his heart sank with dread of the next words Mr. Wright should speak.

"What did you do with the note Mrs. Smith gave you for me, Ford?" asked the master. "I thought it was strange she had sent me no message to account for Smith's absence from school. She tells me she sent me a note yesterday morning by you. Where is it?"

Edmund Ford did not answer at first. He was half choked with fright, scarcely daring to tell a new lie to cover the one he had acted. But there was no help for it now, it was either that, or to confess what he had done on the spot. He had not moral courage enough for this; and having taken the first false step, there was nothing left for him but to plunge in deeper. This he now did, *terrified to see* the extent of the evil into

which his vanity and untruthfulness were driving him.

"I gave it to you yesterday morning, sir," he said, though not without confusion, and flushing up to the roots of his hair. The only thing that could be said for him was, that he was not as yet hardened to this sort of thing.

"I do not recollect your giving me any note," resumed his master, not noticing the boy's confusion, as some one came up to speak to him at that moment.

"Yes, sir, you took it and put it on the desk, just as Mr. Waxsall came in," answered Ford, making a great effort as he alluded to the scene of yesterday, in which he had, unknown to all but himself and George, so large a share.

"It may be," thought the master, as Ford returned to his place; "I might have mislaid it in the confusion. But it is strange that I have not the slightest recollection of it. I think I must have remembered it if I had ever had it." Mr. Wright pondered over this several times in the day, and each time he thought of it, he became more and more alive to a strange mixture of confusion and boldness in Edmund Ford's manner as he questioned him.

Mr. Wright was not the only person in the village who puzzled his or her brains to fix the inroad into farmer Waxsall's orchard on the right

person. There were not many found to believe that George Preston could be the culprit; and they wondered that Squire Wilmot should not have been less hasty to decide against a boy who bore such a character for honesty and truthfulness. More than one said it was a great deal more likely it was Edmund Ford; and one remembered to have seen George and Edmund going to school together; and another to have seen Edmund running along the road very fast as if some one was running after him. When these reports reached Mrs. Ford's ears, as she stood in the cricket field, she was very wroth, and gave the person who said it to understand that her boy was neither a thief nor a liar, as some people's children were, and they had better look at home after their own children, than come and try to take away other people's children's characters. For her part, she thought George richly deserved his flogging, and she was glad Mr. Herbert was not at home to prevent his having it. Every one knew what a favourite George was with Mr. Herbert; George never did anything wrong with him.

Others said, "Ah! if Mr. Herbert had been here, he would have known first whether George Preston really deserved it before he had him flogged; but it was just like Mr. Effingham to condemn him merely because *he* thought him in the *wrong.*"

But all these grumblings and dissatisfaction died away in the excitement of the day. The players were pretty evenly matched, and as the match was between the Lipscombe National School and that of the village of Wepstow, about two miles distant, the eagerness for the honor of the victory was well kept up. And when it was tea time, it was found that the liberality of farmer Waxsall was not confined to the comforts of the school only, but all the mothers had tea and cake, and the fathers as much ale, and bread, and cheese, as they wanted. Everyone was in high spirits; and after tea, there were foot races, football, jumping in sacks, and all sorts of diversions, and no one thought of going home till it became too dark to see where the ball was kicked, or to decide which of the runners came in first.

CHAPTER VIII.

nore Eveleen Wilmot thought over all the nts connected with the stealing of farmer all's cherries, the more convinced she was of ghtness of the proofs upon which such a sum- punishment had been inflicted. She felt sure eorge Preston could not so suddenly, so com- y have forgotten all the religious training, e lessons so carefully inculcated into his from his earliest years, both at home and at . She determined to go and see him the norning, and to give him, if possible, the t of considering him innocent, at least till were stronger proofs of his guilt than those had hitherto been brought against him. instead of going straight to the cricket field, urned down the road which led to Nancy n's cottage, much to the disappointment of out of the Lipscombe eleven anxiously

awaiting her appearance. These seven belonged to the night class which she taught twice a week. They began to think she had forgotten her promise to them, and were in a dreadful state about it, for they were "sure they should have no luck till 'teacher' came." But they were obliged to do without her presence for a time. She found poor George Preston miserably depressed and gloomy. He fancied himself disgraced for life, even if by some unforeseen chance his innocence were discovered at last. The pride which had made him disdain to answer any more questions when Squire Wilmot would not believe his protestations of innocence, kept his lips sealed when his mother, next morning, tried to find out from his answers all he did on his way to school, and whether he had met anyone, or seen anyone on the road. She cross questioned him, poor woman, only thinking how she could elicit some incident which might lead to the discovery of the real culprit. But George, in the present wounded state of his mind, was so over sensitive, that he thought it was because she doubted his word and would never believe him again. Mrs. Preston was very thankful to see Eveleen Wilmot come in. If anyone, beyond his own home, had any influence with George, she had, and the poor mother hoped she might be able to say something which would speak comfort to him.

Eveleen thought it best to see George alone. ; found him sitting at the window of the room ere he had slept. It looked down on the ıdow where the match was going on, and poor ›rge sat and watched the game with feelings he ld not very well define to himself. When he ' Eveleen come into the room he colored vio- ly, and rising from his chair, stood with his d hanging down, and wishing the earth might n and swallow him up.

Why are you ashamed to look me in the face, ›rge?" asked Eveleen, somewhat reproachfully. o you wish me to think you took Mr. Waxsall's rries?"

Oh no, no! Miss Eveleen," said the boy quickly, frank, quick manner roused by such a question. ıt I do not see why you should believe me, any e than, than——" but it seemed as if George ld not bring himself to name any of those con- ıed in his unjustifiable punishment.

But I shall be obliged to think you did," she inued gravely, "if you hang your head down hat way. It is only those who are guilty who afraid to raise their heads before their friends. me look at your eyes, George; very well," she , as the boy turned his bright eyes full on ı; "that is quite enough, you have no need to me that you never took Mr. Waxsall's cherries." he boy's face literally glowed with pleasure,

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but it fell again as he faltered, "I knew you wouldn't think ill of me, Miss Eveleen; but no one else thinks as you do—and I shall never be able to stop here, I shall never be able to show myself, and for people to look at me, after being so disgraced."

"There is no disgrace, except in sin, George. If God knows your innocence, why should you care what man thinks of you? Would you rather men should think you innocent and that God should know you were guilty?"

"Oh, no! Miss Eveleen," returned the boy eagerly; "I am sure you do not think I would."

"Then, what is the matter with you, George? Why are you moping here? and why have you refused the comfort your mother tried to give you? I must scold you, George; you have hurt and grieved your poor mother very much: she, who is so good and kind to you, feeling everything that happens to you as if it happened to herself."

George again hung down his head, and Eveleen told him he well might this time, for he had allowed pride in his unblemished character, anger and revenge against those who had so unjustly punished him, to stifle his better feelings. The boy murmured that it was so hard to be thought guilty when he was not, and to be so severely punished for a fault which he had never committed.

"Was there never any one else mis-judged and

nished in this world, George?" gravely
d Eveleen. "Was there not One who did
neither was guile found in His mouth; who,
Ie was reviled, reviled not again, when He
l, He threatened not, but committed Himself
that judgeth righteously.* What merit is
ıu take punishment you deserve, quietly?
when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take
ntly, this is acceptable with God.' This is
ıristian calling, George. Christ came to be
an ensample of godly life, that we should in
gs imitate Him, and follow in His footsteps
ɜr they lead us. I am surprised that it is
ry to remind you of these things, which
.st know as well as I can tell you."
ɔoy hung down his head still lower, stand-
ɔre her as if she had been the accusing angel,
the message of reproach God had sent him
distrust of Him.
ırge! George!" Eveleen went on to say,
is your faith gone? How long have you
to distrust God, to forget that everything
ɜ is in wisdom and mercy and love? Be-
ou do not see what possible good can come
:his trial to you, are you to rebel against
ıo permitted that it should befal you? Can
your hand on your heart and declare that

* 1 Pet. ii, 20, 21.

you have not deserved to be punished by H
You murmur 'No.' No, none of us can do t
And has it never struck you, my poor boy,"
added, passing her beautiful hand tenderly thro
the boy's sunny curls, "that He means by
very lesson to humble your spirit, and te
you more indulgence towards others, and a
boastful superiority in your own integrity? I
know, George, that you are very proud of be
called the most honest and truthful boy in L
combe; but you are very far from being the n
merciful boy to your fellow-creatures. Now
think God is very good to have sent you this t
to teach you this truth. It shows that He me
you to be really His servant; that you should
longer serve the devils of pride, and hardness,
self-conceit. It is the greatest proof of His l
for you, that you have been so chastised, not
much by man as by God Himself, He whc
invariably works on man by human means. Y
she went on, in a noble, lofty manner, as if
spirit rose with her subject, "and if it be G
will that you should never be cleared of this f
imputation, it would still be a proof of His l
for you. For, if you bear such a slur on your c
racter meekly, because He wills it, and does not
fit to remove it, will He not look down on you v
eyes of gracious approbation, and say to you, 'V
done, thou good and faithful servant?' 'For

just shall live by faith,' George; and this is faith, to trust God, to believe that He doeth all things in love and mercy, even should He kill us."

Eveleen spoke with a full heart, her hands pressed into her bosom, as if she pressed into it the bitter cross which God had sent her to wear. Her eyes filled with tears as she meekly bent her head in silent adoration of Him whose hand had dealt her such a heavy portion of affliction, and which her present remonstrance with George seemed to recall vividly to her mind. George did not see that she stood before him, crowned herself with thorns of God's own plaiting, wearing a cross whose iron points were deep in her heart. No, God alone saw it now; and it was because of her silent communion with Him only that her voice had such power, her lips such persuasive eloquence.

"I know I am very wrong, Miss Eveleen," said George in a subdued voice. "God has been very good to me. I know that I do not deserve that He should. But do you think, Miss Eveleen," he inquired almost timorously, "that He will not choose me to be cleared of—of—" He could not find words to express his thoughts.

"Poor boy!" said Eveleen, again putting her hand on his head. "It *is* a hard trial, George; is it not? But I did not say that He would not choose; I merely said that He might so will it."

"Do you think He will choose I should always bear this blame, Miss Eveleen?" asked George, in a low awe-hushed, but anxious voice.

"I cannot answer that question, dear child," Eveleen said. "You may hope He will choose to clear you in His own good time. Even our blessed Lord Himself prayed in His agony, that the bitter cup might pass from Him; but at the same time He added, 'Yet not my will, but Thine be done, O my Father!'"

Eveleen raised her streaming eyes to heaven, and George, overcome with deep emotion, fell on his knees, hiding his face in his hands. Every devil which had possessed him was now utterly cast out of his heart, and he lay prostrate before the cross of Christ, in wondering amazement of the heavenly forbearance, endurance, and resignation which Eveleen had so forcibly brought back to his mind.

Again Eveleen put her hand on his head as he now knelt before her. "George, dear child!" she said in low solemn tones, "do you, can you forgive those who punished you so unjustly yesterday? Can you forgive Mr. Wilmot? Remember," she said, "if you had been less proud and hard yourself, it is very likely my father would have been less hasty."

"Yes, Miss Eveleen," answered George, still on his knees.

"And Mr. Effingham?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Eveleen," he said, after a moment's hesitation; for George could not forget that he owed his punishment chiefly to this gentleman's interference.

"And Mr. Waxsall, and Mr. Wright?" she continued.

"Oh! yes, Miss Eveleen," he answered joyfully as he heard his master's name. "I don't think master could help it. He wanted them to wait till Mr. Herbert came home, and I daresay Mr. Waxsall thought I did it."

"It would certainly have been better had they waited for Mr. Herbert," replied Eveleen. "But there is still one more whom I must ask if you have forgiven. I mean the one by whose fault you were punished. Can you forgive him?"

"Oh! yes," said George; "I do forgive him; I am very sorry for him. I should not like to have his thoughts for something."

"That is right, George," said Eveleen. "I think he is to be pitied very much. I do not envy him his feelings. Your punishment is light compared to what he must suffer if he really has any knowledge of God, or knows how awful is his crime in the eyes of Him to whom a lie is abhorrent. You see I have not asked you who he is, because I think the feeling which makes you keep his name to yourself, and refuse to clear yourself at his

expense, is a true Christian feeling. It is better to suffer wrong unjustly than deliver a fellow-creature over to the punishment and shame from which you shrink yourself."

George followed Eveleen down-stairs, and going up to his mother, put his arms round her neck and kissed her. Nancy Preston was delighted with the change in his manner, and looked at Eveleen with eyes brimming over with affectionate gratitude. She got some breakfast for the boy, who had hitherto refused to eat; and then conducted Eveleen through the garden, gathering her most-prized flowers for her, an offering which Eveleen took with many thanks.

Soon after this, George was busy working in his mother's garden; then he went after dinner, which he enjoyed wonderfully, down to see how the sheep were getting on in his father's absence. He found the carpenter had brought the new hurdles; so he helped the men to put them up in the new fold.

Coming back past the cricket field, he saw Edmund Ford running after the ball, shouting loudly as he threw it back. George wondered to himself whether Edmund really cared for what he had done, and thought that after all his pity was very likely thrown away upon him.

But Edmund Ford was not so much at his ease, nor as unconcerned as he looked. Most of his gaiety and noise was forced, especially as a little

e after tea he saw one of Farmer Waxsall's
, who had brought the cherries a short time
re, give Mr. Wright a piece of paper, which
ed terribly like the note Mrs. Smith had given
to carry to his master, and about which he had
such a deliberate lie.

I dropped my knife," the man said to Mr.
ght, "as I wor a getting them cherries for tea,
so I went back to look for 'um in the long
s, arter I'd a tuk the cherries in. Looking
er the tree, I found this 'ere bit o' paper; and
Bet, who goes to school, and is a purty tidy
ard, tells me it's yourn, 'cos as how it a got
neame on't. So I thought I'd bring it along
me. I say allus let him have his vot is
t."

r. Wright was amazed when he opened it to
hat it was the missing note which Ford vowed
day before that he had given him. How came
ider the cherry tree? Had he been there with
rge, or had he been there alone, and George had
nothing to do with it? Then Mr. Wright
lenly remembered the fact that Ford's trowsers
torn in the leg, and were all green as if he had
climbing. He said no more about it to the
, but thanked him for the note, putting it into
pocket-book, determined this time he would
no one into his counsel till Mr. Herbert came
e. Shortly after this he left the cricket field,

where he was not even missed in all the excitement. He went straight to Farmer Waxsall's orchard, and soon finding the cherry tree by its description, he went up to the palings near it, and inspected them closely. Presently he found what he was looking for, the piece of Edmund Ford's trowsers, sticking on the nail which had torn them off.

"Just as I thought," said Mr. Wright to himself, as he put the piece into his pocket-book, beside the note. "They will not dare to overrule Mr. Herbert as they would me, and poor George must be thoroughly cleared of this. What a dastardly, cowardly fellow that Edmund Ford must be!—the gayest of the gay, and such a load of guilt on his heart."

But day after day passed, and Mr. Herbert did not return. Mrs. Herbert's brother died, and they remained to the funeral, a strange clergyman coming to help Mr. Effingham to do the duty for the two Sundays they should still be delayed. Eveleen had taken counsel with Mr. Wright and the boy's mother, and it had been determined between them that it would be better George should not go back to school, but should join the evening class for the present. One evening, while he was waiting for her, about a week after the cricket match, Mr. Effingham came up to George where he was standing alone, and began to "improve the opportunity," in a tone which

moment bid fair to rouse feelings in the boy's heart which it would have grieved Eveleen to know were still lurking ready to spring up again. The remembrance of all Eveleen had said to him of his Saviour's forbearance and meekness under such sufferings as He endured, fortunately came to his mind, and quenched the rising angry spirit. Mr. Effingham could not but notice the quick flush of indignation die away still more quickly, and was as much puzzled as to the cause as he was the change in the boy's manner. Eveleen Wilmot came up time enough to prevent this trial of George's new strength from lasting too long; and the look of reproach she gave the Rev. Mr. Basil, though it cowed him at the moment, made him think afterwards what a great mistake it was to allow women to interfere so much in the education of boys, who ought to be left entirely under the control of the clergy.

George had met Squire Wilmot twice. As the first time he was on horseback, he merely took off his cap as the Squire passed him. The next meeting with him was when he was down with the sheep in the meadow; but as the Squire did not speak to him, and went away after some directions to the men at work on the new fence, George had no opportunity of testing his real feelings towards him. Farmer Waxsall he had not seen, but his master, Mr. Wright, had been to see him several

times; and George felt, by his kind manner towards him, that he knew it was not he who had been surprised in the orchard that morning. He could not tell of course how it was that Mr. Wright had found out that he had been unjustly punished, but he knew that he had, and that seemed a great consolation to George, if he had needed more than the true comfort Eveleen Wilmot had brought him. Edmund Ford did not come near him; it was the last thing George would have expected him to do.

When Eveleen Wilmot said something to Mrs. Ford about his never having been near his old schoolfellow, such friends as they had always been, Mrs. Ford answered her rather pertly, and said she could not blame Edmund for not wishing to have much to say to one who had brought such disgrace on himself and family.

"Birds of a feather flock together, ma'am," she said, with freezing politeness; "and as my Edmund is above such doings, though he don't pretend to so much goodness as some people do, it ain't surprising to me as he don't want to have much to say to them as isn't."

Eveleen passed over such remarks in silence. As time wore on, something Mr. Wright let drop in a conversation he had with her about George, and something she heard in the village, made her doubt very much whether the motive Mrs. Ford assigned

to Edmund was the real cause of his aversion to meet his old companion, or whether it were not rather the accusations of his own conscience.

Mark Preston had come back with the New Zealand sheep. At first he was very much troubled at all that had happened to his boy in his absence. An interview with Eveleen Wilmot, and another with Mr. Wright, had, however, given him a great deal of trust and comfort; so that when he and George were alone with the sheep in the field, the confidence which had always existed between father and son was not overshadowed by the least cloud.

"Miss Eveleen is always in the right of it, mate," he remarked, after George had told him all she said to him that day. "If we could only always believe that all that happens to us is for some good, though we can't see it at the time, it would be a deal better for our happiness in this life, as well as in the next. Faith in the Lord is to trust that all He does is right, and to feel that whatever happens to us is for some good purpose or other."

So George seemed to get on pretty well, although some people did show a marked difference in their manner to him. But as those he most cared for were more considerate towards him, it did not much disturb his peace of mind. And then was he not

sustained by a strength from above? Jessie Ford had met him twice as he came back from school, and had spoken to him very kindly. She was a very good-hearted girl, and felt really sorry for George. Not that she thought it such a great crime to be found in Farmer Waxsall's orchard, but that it was such a disgrace to have been so publicly flogged.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Herbert had scarcely been home an hour before he went to see Mr. Wright. He was very much shocked to hear of the severe and unmerited punishment which had been inflicted on George Preston. He could not blame Mr. Wright for his unwilling share in it, as he could scarcely help himself; but he had a few thoughts about the Rev. Mr. Basil Effingham and the part he had in that transaction not very much in his favour. It did not want much to show Mr. Herbert who was the real culprit, and when he told Mr. Wright that he perfectly remembered seeing Ford jump down from the orchard and run away, the last evidence was complete. The next step was to let Edmund Ford know that he was found out, and to clear George as publicly as he had been punished. The next was to try and induce Ford to make some reparation o George for all he had suffered on his account, by ublicly *confessing his* guilt. This Mr. Herbert

well knew was no easy task. From his intimate knowledge of human nature, he had learnt how much easier it is to harden the heart of one who plunges into sin through the fear of man, than to lead it to repentance and a noble confession. There was more hope, he afterwards told Eveleen Wilmot, for one who sinned through pride and obstinacy than for one who sinned through cowardice. The first might be humbled, the second subdued, but the weakness of a weak mind was the most difficult to deal with. He felt also that he risked what slight influence he had with Edmund's father and mother, who were not likely to be best pleased that this disgrace should be shifted on to he shoulders of their own child, about whom, too, Mrs. Ford had been so publicly virtuous. But come what might of it, Mr. Herbert knew it must be done; and he decided that it would be best to see Edmund Ford first, and try what impression he could produce on him.

It was well that he was not too sanguine as to the result of his efforts in that quarter. Edmund Ford was sick with fright when Mr. Herbert, taking him into the class-room, told him that he was found out, and laid all the evidence which had led to the discovery of his fault before him. But no persuasion, no eloquence of that earnest mind, those fervid lips, could prevail on the boy to make a public confession of the cruel lie he had acted. The

reparation was beyond his strength. There was not any nobility of soul in one so completely eaten up with the fear of public opinion, equal to such a sacrifice. In vain Mr. Herbert represented to him that it was only by such self-surrender to God he could prove that his repentance was not a mere form of words, but was indeed that "change of mind" without which his sin would still cleave to him, with all its demoralising influences.

Eveleen Wilmot had had an easier task of it with George Preston, because there was that difference between him and Edmund Ford which always exists between a mind religiously trained from its earliest youth to feel the hand of God in the minutest accidents of life, to feel His love most in His chastenings, and a mind left to its own vague and timorous misgivings, swayed by the fear of man's opinions, blaming everyone and everything but his own vanity for every mishap which might befall him, and cringing in the most abject fear from the just retribution his sin had now entailed upon him.

He must indeed have had a heart trebly encased in self-love, to resist as he did the strenuous pleadings with which Mr. Herbert pleaded for his soul. He certainly trembled when the minister of God asked him how it was he had hoped to escape from His all-seeing eye?—if he had forgotten that to doubt the omniscience and omnipotence of the Almighty was to take His holy name in vain in a

far more awful sense than even using it in a profane oath, bad as that was in itself. Did he not know, he asked him, that sooner or later His unerring justice overtook the guilty, and it would fall the heavier on those who had dared to think His eye was covered that it could not see, or His arm shortened that it could not reach? When they least expected it, and had contrived to lull themselves into a false security, retribution would overtake them who had so blasphemed His power and His righteous dealing with men.

There is no slave so enslaved as the slave of sin. Edmund Ford felt the truth of all that Mr. Herbert said to him; he would fain have accepted the shelter of Christ's forgiveness thus offered to him; but he could not do so without paying the cost it required, even the surrender of himself, body and soul, to the Saviour. He knew the extent of his guilt; he felt that reparation to George was the price by which alone he could purchase for himself those blessed words from Him who alone had power to pronounce them, "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" Do what he would to silence them, the words of Zaccheus rang in his ears: "And if I have done wrong to any man, behold, Lord, I restore to him fourfold." He knew perfectly that it was this offered restitution which alone won for Zaccheus the joyful assurance that "that day salvation had come to his house." Because that

"change of mind" had come to him which the grace of God alone can give, a change which showed him that nothing was to be had in comparison with the love of Christ, and that to obtain that love we must undo what we had done wrong, even to the shedding of our last drop of blood.* Edmund Ford had been taught by Mr. Herbert that salvation was of this world as well as of the next, a present salvation from the power of sin over us, which enabled us to give up whatever sin, however dear to us, which separated us from the love of Christ. He knew that if that blessed salvation had come to him, sin would have no more dominion over him, but he would be enabled to serve God without let or hindrance, be the cost what it might of earthly desire or most passionate will. But that salvation had not come to him yet, and for the simple reason that he still withstood Christ, ready and willing to give it to him to the uttermost, kept back as he was by the earthly fear of man's opinion and man's punishment. And what was still worse for him was that he knew also, from Mr. Herbert's teaching, that it would have been better for him had he never known these things, than that, knowing them as he did, he should not realise them. His heart sank within him at the thought. He felt like one stunned. and as if nothing but flight, that last resource of the coward, could save him

* Lev. xvii, 18; Heb. ix, 22.

from the stern searcher of his soul, who forced him to look upon these dreadful truths.

And it was flight he meditated, even whilst the minister of God was still pleading with him. When he found he made so little impression upon him, Mr. Herbert thought he would leave him to his own reflections, giving him till the morning to consider all he had said to him, praying that he might have grace given him to enable him to follow the only course which could lead him to salvation. When Mr. Herbert called the next morning at the house, he was not much surprised to hear that Edmund had left Lipscombe soon after he had parted with him the evening before. It was not Mrs. Ford who told him where he had gone; it was not for some days after that he heard he had been sent to the house of an uncle who was a draper in Islington. Some time farther on, Mr. Herbert heard that he was apprenticed to his uncle and served in the shop, where his quick intelligence and love of approbation made him of some importance to the master he strove to please; and Mr. Herbert could not help thinking over all the temptations to which a boy of his nature was exposed in such a situation.

From this small incident in Farmer Waxsall's orchard arose consequences of the most serious nature to more than one member of the Ford family, and for Mr. Herbert such a wrestle with the powers of darkness as tried that true servant of the Good

Shepherd more than any other incident of his previous life. Of course he could not foresee all that his Master had in store for him, but he went about his daily work as usual, though his mind was greatly preoccupied with all these things, pondering and weighing consequences, if by any means he could yet save those they seemed to threaten most.

His first care was to exonerate George from all share in the orchard transaction. This he did as publicly as George had been punished. George Preston, however, was not in the school when Mr. Herbert told the boys that it was Edmund Ford, and not he, who was in Mr. Waxsall's orchard that morning. In showing to them the means by which the real culprit had been found out, he dwelt upon the fact that it was very rarely the guilty escaped detection, and if they could only realise the fact, that it was ten chances to one that they would be found out, and that before very long, he thought many more would hesitate before they committed themselves to sin. He said that even the guilty had reason to be most thankful when they were found out, and by a wholesome punishment brought back to the paths of honesty and truth before they had gone too far to return. The few words in which he spoke of the manner in which George had endured an unjust punishment, rather than clear himself at the expense of his schoolfellow, sank deeply into their minds, and fired

them with an ambition to "go and do likewise." Mr. Herbert's words always had the effect of stirring up his listeners to loftier aspirations, often to holier deeds, and once heard they were not easily forgotten.

George Preston was very glad to be cleared from the stigma of such a disgrace as had befallen him so unawares; but he was not elevated by his restoration to his right position. He was too well taught for any such unbecoming triumph. He rather received the great blessing of his restored innocence with great meekness and gratitude to Him who had been pleased that he should be cleared of such an imputation, for he well knew that it was not for any merit of his own that it had been permitted that such a cloud should pass from him. This trial had the blessed effect such trials generally have on those whose hearts are given to God. It humbled him, and kept him humble and gentle and forbearing to all, given to more charity towards his companions' failings, and less hasty to pass harsh judgments on the motives of others. He was pleased, and very naturally so, when Squire Wilmot came to him one evening, when he was in the field minding the sheep, and told him he was sorry to think he had been unjustly punished. He said he was glad to find that George really was the honourable, truthful boy he had always thought him—a testimony which pleased George very much, though *one more* worldly-wise than he might have answered

the Squire with justice, that he might as well have given him the benefit of that thought before he pronounced his summary sentence. But George was of too generous a nature to bear any one a lurking grudge. On the contrary, he most freely forgave every one concerned in that punishment, and rather thought Squire Wilmot the very paragon of masters, when he ended his exordium to George by committing to his sole charge the care of the four New Zealand sheep. He said that he felt sure George would do his duty by them; he knew that his father had already initiated him into the various diseases and treatment of sheep, and he could always consult his father's skill when at fault himself. This and the few kind words in which the Squire spoke of the forbearance and endurance George had shown in the unfortunate affair of the orchard, won the boy's heart; and if Squire Wilmot had ordered him another flogging on the spot, there is not a doubt but in his present state of mind George would have believed it was quite right.

Mark Preston was so pleased when coming up out of another field, he found George with his new charge in a state of untold delight. He knew that the Squire meant it as a great reparation to George, for he thought immensely of his foreign sheep. "But then," he said, "mate, he knows they will be well tended, for thee knowest now, e'en a'most as well as I do, how to handle a sheep."

The four New Zealand sheep prospered famously under George's care, and the Squire was well pleased with their keeper. He seldom let a day pass without coming to see them, and this brought him into constant contact with his young shepherd; and he was day by day pleased and astonished to find how well the boy's mind had been trained to self-control and self-denial, and how he was always casting about to do what was right, and not what he wished to do.

"Yes," Mr. Herbert said in answer to the Squire's observations on this point, "that boy is his own master, he can rule himself; a power to which only those attain who have been early taught perfect obedience, reverence, and the love and fear of God. Better indeed would it be for men if when they were young, they had such a training as George has had. He has much cause to be for ever grateful to the parents who have made him what he is; an early religious training can alone effect such a state of mind. It is the easiest thing in the world to guide, control, and teach self-denial and self-restraint to the young, if it is done in affection and in the fear of God. Many a man in after life has come to imprisonment, exile, even death, through no other cause but the blind indulgence or negligence of parents in their youth. Many an upgrown man has had cause to curse the folly of his parents for his blighted manhood; and it would be well for parents if they

could remember this, when for the sake of a little present peace and ease, or through a fond and foolish affection, they let the child have everything it seems to want. If they would only remember that by such mismanagement of the young souls entrusted to their care, they incur the anger of God, who will most assuredly require the children He has given them at their hands, and whom they have ruined body and soul, both in this world and the world to come!

Part Second.

GONE ASTRAY.

"And he took his journey into a far country. . . And he sent him into his fields to feed swine, . . and he filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat:" LUKE xv, 13, 15.

CHAPTER I.

EVERYTHING worked together for good to the Prestons, because they felt that whatever happened to them was ordered for some good purpose, for some training, to lead them to a better understanding of Him who "girded them" for whatsoever He had appointed them in life. Not so the Fords. They never saw the hand of God in anything that befel them. It was always their "ill-luck," "the spite of some one who owed them a grudge," or some other equally foolish cause, to which they owed it when things went against them. It therefore did them no good hitherto to suffer in any way; it brought them neither knowledge nor even teaching. In that affair of the orchard, the Fords, father and mother, attributed all that had happened to the interference of Mr. Herbert, his partiality for George, and his injustice to Edmund. Mrs. Ford persisted in saying her son was innocent, and falsely

accused by George, who was deceitful and cunning enough to shift the blame off his own shoulders on to those of one who had never anything in common with him. Poor Edmund had been most unjustly treated. Of course he was obliged to leave Lipscombe. Mr. Herbert was determined he should bear the blame of that affair, and what could the poor boy do but leave a place where he stood a fair chance of being worried out of his life, unless he publicly owned to a thing he had never done? She sulked with Mr. Herbert, would not speak to him when he came to the house; took the younger children away from school, although they worried her life out at home, so unruly, so uncontrolled as they were; and walked nearly half a mile out of her way one morning, that she might not meet Eveleen Wilmot on her way down the village. Her husband was as sulky and more surly than ever. Though to other people they had both agreed to blame everyone but themselves for the disgrace which had fallen on Edmund, at home they retorted fiercely upon one another as having been the cause of it—the father by bad example, the mother by foolish indulgence and pampering of his vanity. The consequence of this mutual recrimination was fierce quarrels between husband and wife, bitter tauntings, revilings, till at last Ford would go off to the public-house, not to return till late at night, and then in a state which made him dangerous

f opposed; whilst his wife sulked at home, bemoaning her hard lot, and alternately scolding he children, abusing Mr. Herbert, and crying.

After some fruitless attempts on the part of both Mr. and Mrs. Herbert to induce a better state of hings, the Rector told his wife they had better eave them alone for the present, as every fresh rial seemed only to make them harder and more obdurate. Time, he hoped, and the grace of God might some day enable them to see things in a different light; circumstances might be mercifully sent which would subdue them, and make them seek and cling to the sympathy and kindness they now so entirely rejected.

But what distressed both the Rector of Lipscombe and Eveleen Wilmot most was, that as time went on, this state of things at home was imperceptibly working a change for the worse in Jessie Ford. She was so winning in her ways, so affectionate, that no one who had so much to do with her as Mr. and Mrs. Herbert and Eveleen Wilmot could fail to love her, and to be deeply grieved to find their influence with her very much on the wane. She seemed restless and flighty and discontented; rather shunned meeting any of them, instead of seeking them, as she had hitherto done. The last time Eveleen had met her, Jessie had been peevish to her, pert in her answers and manner, and altogether so strange as to surprise Eveleen very much, as

usually the girl had been quite the reverse with her, being gentle and courteous to all, but especially to Eveleen, for whom she had always shown so much affection.

There was to be a grand wedding at the Hall, and Susan Preston was sitting at home, intent upon finishing some work for the grand occasion, sent down to her at the recommendation of Eveleen Wilmot, who knew what a perfect and industrious needlewoman she was. Jessie, going up the path to the cottage, looked in at the window at which Mary sat working. She asked if she were alone, and if she could come in.

"Oh! yes, do come in," said Susan; "I wanted to see you. Mother is gone up to the Rectory to help turn the bacon they salted last week, and father and George won't be home yet for some time. They are gone to look after some hurdles at Wotton, and that you know is a good three miles there and back; so I don't expect they'll be home much before tea."

"I am glad you are alone," said Jessie. "I have got something to show you, and I want to speak to you about it."

"What is it, Jessie?" asked Susan, as her old schoolfellow now entered the room.

"Only another letter from Edmund," she answered as she sat down at the window near Susan, and looked gloomily out on the pretty little garden

and the beautiful woods beyond. "It is such a shame! Here am I, moped to death at home; and there is he, enjoying himself so in London. He tells me he goes out every night to some place of amusement or other, and says he never did a better day's work for himself than when he went away from Lipscombe."

"I hope he won't find out some day that it would have been a better day for him never to have left it," answered Susan.

"Law! Susan, what can you possibly mean?" asked Jessie in great surprise.

"I do not think so much going out at night can do Edmund much good. It must unfit him for work next day."

"What nonsense you talk, Susan!" said Jessie pettishly. "You know as well as I do that people can't always be at work, plod, plod all day long, without a bit of holiday or pleasure."

"You know I do not think they should, Jessie. What I mean is that too much pleasure night after night, at some scene of excitement or other, is a bad thing for anyone, but especially for Edmund."

"I don't see how that can be," said Jessie. "Pleasure can never do any one harm. I'll tell you what does people more harm than that, and that's living in such constant rows as we do at home. I know I'm sick of them, and father's so bad sometimes you'd think he was going to kill every

one of us. I don't see why I should be obliged to put up with it, if Edmund isn't, and I shall give mother no peace till she lets me go to London. Aunt Mason has written to mother more than once, but mother says I shan't go; it is not a fit place for me."

"I expect your mother is about right there," answered Susan. "From all I've ever heard of London, I don't think it's the most easy place to live in so as to keep out of harm's way; and if you would take my advice, it would be the last place you would want to go to."

Jessie did not relish such advice, nor did she thank Susan much for it. She had sought her out, hoping she might support her in her views about going to London, and was vexed to find her so thoroughly deprecating her plans. She sat moodily looking at Susan, who kept on, sewing steadily.

"How you can sit so close at work, I can't think," said Jessie, after some moments' silence. "There you go, stitch, stitch, and never look off your work, nor seem to want to go out of this hot stifling room, not that it is much better out of doors. I never knew how wretched this place has become."

"I am sure it is a very beautiful place, Jessie; it is so pretty from this window, with the flowers in the garden, and the woods and meadows beyond. And there is such a lovely breeze this afternoon, bringing in the smell of the hay from Mr. Waxsall's

meadow, it is quite refreshing. And then I do so like to hear the birds making such a noise over their twigs where they are going to roost, the pigeons cooing in the wood, and the blackbirds and thrushes singing so prettily; and it won't be long before the nightingale, which has its nest up in the elm-tree in the churchyard yonder, begins to sing. Then you know I must work to finish these things off. The wedding you know will be next Thursday fortnight, and they've got to be all marked and washed, and got up and packed by that time."

"Yes, there's luck again! Why should some people have everything in this world, and other people nothing? Why should not I be going to be married, and have a lot of fine clothes like Miss Sophy Wilmot, and a power of fine people to come to my wedding? I wish I were her, to have a grand house and carriage in London, and lots of money, as they say she'll have."

"You might not be a bit the happier for it, Jessie," answered Susan. "It is not these things—money, grand house, fine clothes, or fine friends—which make people happy. Very often it is these things which make those who have them most unhappy."

"I never!" exclaimed Jessie. "I am sure they can't make people unhappy."

"Yes, they can, Jessie. Every state of life has its temptations and its trials; and I have often

heard Mr. Herbert say that those who were rich had greater temptations than those who were poor. Riches so often harden people's hearts, and make them forget who gave them to them for a better purpose than merely their own enjoyment. It's content with one's lot in life, be it what it may, which makes people happy, remembering Who appointed us each our lot, and striving to do our duty to our best endeavour in that lot, without wishing ourselves some one else, which we know we can never be."

"I am sure there can be no harm in wishing one's-self Miss Sophy Wilmot," answered Jessie; "you know that won't make me her."

"That's why it is so foolish, and encouraging one's discontent; and from all I have ever heard Mr. Herbert say, I think it is very wrong as well as foolish."

Mr. Herbert was very much grieved when he heard of this conversation, for it came round to him in due time. Of course Susan told her mother when she came home in what a sad state of mind poor Jessie was, and Mrs. Preston told Mrs. Herbert, who repeated it to her husband.

"I was sure something was wrong with her," observed the Rector; "she has not been like herself for some months now. I must speak to her, poor child; if she gets such ideas as these into her head, *she* will be very unhappy. I hope she will not

prevail on her mother to let her go to town; that is the last place I should like to know her in."

The Rector said these last words with something like a sigh. He did not tell Mrs. Herbert the suspicions which made him more uneasy about Jessie Ford than he liked to acknowledge even to himself. He wished to save Jessie from the suspicion of any but himself, and he meant to try what his remonstrance would do to stop her in a foolish, thoughtless conduct he thought he had observed, before she was gone beyond recall.

The marriage of the Squire's niece, Miss Sophy Wilmot, which was to take place at the Hall, had brought a large assemblage of friends to witness the happy event. Amongst these was a cousin of the bride, a Mr. Jocelyn, on furlough from India. Jessie, who knew some of the servants at the Hall, had been up several times to see or hear something of the preparations that were making. Once or twice she had met some of the company, and her pretty face, and still prettier shyness, had not failed to attract the notice of the gentlemen, more particularly that of the young Indian officer. Jessie had stolen a glance at him under her long black eyelashes, and she knew him again when she met him a day or two afterwards in one of the plantations, to which he had evidently followed her as she went home. It was that very evening that Mr. Herbert met Jessie, with bright eyes and

glowing cheeks, courtesying and blushing still more deeply, as she passed him on her way. A few steps farther Mr. Herbert caught a glimpse through the trees of the retreating figure of one whom he could not help thinking she had met, either by design or accident. At that distance he could not well see who was her apparent companion; but his heart misgave him sadly as he pursued his walk, lost in contemplation of all the sorrow and shame to which such an intimacy as he suspected might lead.

It was a day or two before Mr. Herbert could find an opportunity of speaking to Jessie. He knew it was useless to call at her house. Mrs. Ford would neither see him nor let Jessie come down to him once before when he called to see her. He thought, too, Jessie's own conscience might alarm her, if she thought he wanted to speak to her; so he only advised Mrs. Herbert to employ her about something, if she could induce her to work, and he asked Susan Preston to be with her as much as her leisure would allow.

But Jessie was very shy of Susan Preston, and kept out of every one's way as much as possible. Meeting Mrs. Herbert accidentally, she gave a confused account of herself for not having answered a message Mrs. Herbert had sent her by the cook, and contradicted herself so openly that that lady

could not but fancy something was more than usually wrong. With sudden ingenuity she invented an excuse for carrying Jessie off to the Rectory with her, in a way the girl could not resist, the old habits of reverence and obedience to her teachers not quite destroyed as yet by home influence.

Fortunately Mr. Herbert was at home in his study, where he was preparing for his Sunday duties. As soon as his wife told him that she had brought Jessie back with her, and her reasons for doing so, he asked her to send her in to him.

Jessie trembled very much when she found herself in Mr. Herbert's study. She felt conscious that she had not escaped his penetrating eyes in her goings and comings of the last few days. And yet his manner was so kind and gentle that it ought to have reassured her that she stood in the presence of a guide and father, not in that of a judge.

With many tears and blushes Jessie confessed that she had met Mr. Jocelyn several times. She had not sought him; indeed she had not; he had followed her the first time, and she had been so frightened, she had begged him not to follow her again. As she sobbed out all his promises and flattering speeches, Mr. Herbert's heart glowed with righteous indignation against the

heartless man who, for the gratification of his own selfishness, had tried to snatch the poor trembling lamb from the fold. He saw all the innocence of Jessie's heart, guilty as yet only of thoughtlessness, inconsideration, and fluttering vanity.

"No, of course you are not happy, my poor child," said Mr. Herbert. You know as well as I can tell you that all these promises are false, and you know that no young man in his rank of life ought to speak to a girl in a station like yours in such a manner. My poor, poor child!" groaned Mr. Herbert, "to think that your beautiful face should be only a snare for you!" and he walked about the room, as if to enable him to collect his thoughts and decide upon the best course to pursue under the circumstances, and to put Jessie, if possible, beyond reach of the danger which now threatened her.

As Jessie stooped to pick up the pocket handkerchief that she had dropped, a handsome gold cross escaped from the folds of her necktie, and falling on her breast, attracted Mr. Herbert's attention.

"What is this, Jessie?" he asked, going up to her, and taking it in his hand, he looked at it, a thousand conflicting thoughts crossing each other in his mind.

Poor Jessie blushed more deeply than ever. She

stammered out a few faltering words, which she meant should tell Mr. Herbert from whom she had the ornament she had coveted, ever since she had seen one like it on the neck of Miss Sophy Wilmot.

Mr. Herbert's eyes flashed with indignation. What a horrible mockery of all that was most sacred, that this holy symbol should have been given to the unfortunate child by the very man who was doing his utmost to drag her far from the feet of Him who died upon it! Then his mood changed to one of tender pity and deep compassion for the poor lamb trembling before him, and he was almost moved to tears as he spoke again.

"Oh! Jessie, Jessie!" he exclaimed, "how could you hang such a thing upon your neck, and not think of all the dreadful sufferings it must recall to you? of all that He endured of agony and bitter shame, that we might be free from the dominion of our own wills and passionate desires? What self-denial, what perfect obedience, even unto death, were His, that we might be enabled to draw near to His Father, and lead a life of godliness and purity! My child, my child! when you put this on did it not speak to you of that perfect sacrifice? Did it not remind you that you were pledged by all your vows of baptism, by your still later renewed vows of confirmation, to imitate, to the best of your power, that all-comprehensive sacrifice; and by

forsaking all folly, levity, vanity, all self-seeking, self-love, and self-will, you were to surrender yourself, in perfect obedience and love, to your Heavenly Father, even if it cost you all that seemed to you most worth living for in this life, but which you know is contrary to His holy will? Oh! Jessie, Jessie! God protect you, my poor child! I fear you are past the protection of man. Take that cross into your heart, my child; there let it enable you to root out and cast away far from you all fond and foolish hankerings after things which you know can only be obtained by the cost of all that is pleasing in the sight of God. I fear your enemies are too strong for you; all your own feelings, hopes, and wishes are arrayed against you, and you have nothing but your own weak, fond, and foolish little heart to do battle with these giants. Pray, my child, for help, from whence alone can come the help which will enable you to come out of this conflict. Torn and wounded and bleeding though it may be, yet it is better to triumph over your present temptations even so, than to fall!"

Jessie wept bitterly. She was very fond of Mr. Herbert, who had always been so kind to her, and taken the liveliest and tenderest interest in her welfare. When he came near her, and put his hand on her head, his eyes full of tears, his voice full of emotion and earnest pleading, Jessie felt as if her *heart* would have died away within her, and as if

she were ready to give up all the brightest moments of the last few days so that she might be again the Jessie she was before the unlucky evening in which she had met the party from the Hall.

"Make no promises, dear child," said Mr. Herbert, interrupting her half-broken speech. "Rather pray for grace to keep your inward resolutions. In the meantime I will see what can be done. We will send for Mrs. Herbert. I should like you to remain at the Rectory till all the Hall company is gone. I daresay we can find something to keep you here."

"Oh! please, sir, don't tell Mrs. Herbert," implored Jessie; "she would think me so very wicked. I am sure I shall never be able to look her in the face again, nor anyone else, for the matter of that," she added, with almost a groan of despair.

"No, my child; it has not come to shame yet, thank God. You must not think Mrs. Herbert will be hard with you. On the contrary, she will feel the greatest affection for you when she finds how much you want a mother's love and protection to shield you from harm. Poor child!" he continued, again putting his hand on her head; "everything is against you—home influence, home education, even the weakness of your own fond heart."

CHAPTER II.

When Mrs. Herbert heard all the details of her husband's interview with Jessie, she willingly entered into his plan of keeping her at the Rectory till the bustle of the wedding was over. She despatched her cook to Mrs. Ford's house to say that she should like Jessie to stay with her for a few days, to help take care of the children whilst the under-nurse went home to see her mother; Mrs. Herbert taking that opportunity to give her a holiday, and so make her pretext for keeping Jessie less liable to remark in the village. Mrs. Ford was out when the messenger arrived at her house. She was gone to Brookfield, the next market town, to see her sister, who was ill, and was not to return till next day. Mrs. Herbert went down the village herself to ask Mrs. Preston to let Susan go and see what she could do for the Fords in the absence both of Jessie and her mother. Mr. Ford found no fault

with this arrangement, as somehow or other, Susan contrived to make his house a little more comfortable, and to cook his supper a little better than it had been for some time. Betsy Ford, now growing up to be quite a help in the house, was very pleased to be called to Susan's assistance, and proved, under her directions, a very tidy, handy, little servant. Mrs. Herbert was very much pleased to hear Susan's good report of the child she had watched with so much interest when she had the typhus fever, and promised herself not to lose sight of her, but to give her, if she ever had the chance, a better training than she was likely to receive at home.

Betsy got her father's breakfast ready next morning, following out Susan's directions to be sure and make the room very tidy. Susan stayed to get her father's breakfast before she went down to the Fords again, and then she found Mr. Ford had gone to work, leaving word that his wife had written to say, she should not be home till the day after next, as her sister wished her to stay; and sent directions to Jessie, not knowing she was not at home, saying she would do very well till she came. When Susan went up to tell Mrs. Herbert, she found Jessie playing with the two youngest children in the hay field. She told Susan she had not been so happy for a long time; Mr. and Mrs. Herbert were both so kind to her.

"But there; you know, Susan, I shall have to go home when mother comes home. She'll never let me stay here. You will see it will be the first thing she does when she comes home."

"That would be a very great pity," said Susan, "if you like being here."

"I do like being here; it is so peaceful and so quiet, and nurse is so kind to me. She does not grumble and fly out at me, as mother does when I don't do things right, but is so patient, and takes so much pains to show me. But mother won't let me stay here another minute when she knows it. She has never forgiven Mr. Herbert about Edmund."

"That is not just," remarked Susan; "for it was not Mr. Herbert's fault that Edmund got into disgrace."

"It's all the same to mother, Susan, and I shall have to go home through it; and I shall be so very sorry. I hope Mr. Herbert won't let me go."

"If your mother wants you home, Jessie," replied Susan, "Mr. Herbert will be the last person to prevent your going. Remember what he said about obedience to parents only two Sundays ago, and told us it was the root of our obedience to God."

Mrs. Ford was very angry when she came home. Everyone came in for a share of her wrath—her husband for allowing Jessie to stay at the Rectory, Jessie for going there, Mrs. Herbert for making use of Edmund's sister after Mr. Herbert's injustice to

him; and she was furious with Susan for meddling with her household, setting Betsy up to think she was a woman, and able to undertake work quite beyond her. There would be no end to the airs she would give herself, if she could cook the dinner or sweep the house; but she would let her know now she was come home.

And she did let them all know. She made the house so uncomfortable to her husband that he bitterly regretted Susan and her quiet ways, and the nice dinners she cooked for him. Swearing and cursing his wife, he took himself off to the Chequers to dine, and left Mrs. Ford to cry over the dinner she had spoilt through her bad temper and slovenly cooking.

She had sent Betsy up to the Rectory with a message to Jessie, to come home and mind her own work before she did that of other people. Mr. Herbert was the first to tell Jessie that she must obey her mother's summons. Jessie left the Rectory with many tears, whilst Mr. Herbert had many misgivings about one so easily swayed by the feelings of the moment.

"God's ways are not our ways, Mary," he said to his wife. "We can see no way of keeping her out of harm's way, but by giving her a refuge with us. God may have other ways which he will raise up in due season, though we cannot foresee them; and if, for some reason, inscrutable to us, He does

not mean that she should be kept from harm, no worrying or fretting of ours, you know, will save her. We can but do what He permits. I think Mrs. Ford had better be warned of the danger that may befall Jessie; and as she is as prejudiced against Eveleen Wilmot as she is against us, I think it would be as well to ask Mrs. Preston to see her. I think she would speak judiciously to Mrs. Ford, so as not aggravate her, and make her act through a spirit of contradiction."

But Mrs. Preston, with all her good sense and kindly feeling, failed most signally in her mission. Mrs. Ford was not in a mood to listen to anyone, or take advice, just then, of any kind. She scouted the idea of Jessie being in any danger of the sort, taunted Mrs. Preston with jealousy that her daughter Susan did not attract so much attention as Jessie.

"I should indeed be sorry, that she ever did attract such attention as that," she replied, as she rose to go. "I hope all I have said may have no foundation. I am very fond of Jessie, and I should be very grieved if she came to any mischief."

"And pray why should she come to any mischief, any more than your precious Susan, I should like to know?" asked the unreasonable woman. "I should wish you to know that my Jessie has been quite as well brought up as your Susan, and why she is to be suspected and watched any more than *her*, I don't know; and what's more, I won't have

it, and she shall go out as much as she likes, without any interference or meddling from anyone." Something just then withheld her from signalising Mr. Herbert, as she had meant.

"No one can do more for you than Mr. Herbert has done," said Mrs. Preston, provoked with the woman's ingratitude and wilful blindness; "and if you do not choose to be warned by him, of course you will do as you like, and of course you will take the consequences, whatever they may be."

"Oh! never mind the consequences," said Mrs. Ford; "they won't be so very dreadful, I daresay; and if they are, why that's my look out, not yours, you know," she continued, though her voice faltered and lowered considerably in tone, as if the reckless words she spoke shocked her in spite of herself. She soon recovered her spirits, however, and Mrs. Preston left her as loud, angry, and defiant as she had found her.

By a strange contradiction of human nature, the first thing she did when Jessie came in, after Mrs. Preston had left, was to reproach her, in no measured terms, for her levity and flightiness, bringing disgrace upon herself and all about her. The result of her coarse language was to make Jessie revolt from her, and feel very angry with Mr. Herbert for exposing her to her mother and Mrs. Preston, and very angry with this last that she should know anything about it; still

more so for speaking of it to her mother. Her self-love was wounded, and she felt aggrieved and humbled, whilst her mother's taunts and reproaches cut her to the heart. It was altogether an unfavourable contrast to Mr. Herbert's mild remonstrance, and the affectionate interest he had shown in her.

Poor Jessie! removed from the kind, peaceful, holy influences which surrounded her at the Rectory, and thrown once more into the jarring discord of her own home, she soon felt all the restless longings to be what she was not, to go where she could not be, return with all the greater power that they had, for a time, been driven out. She began to think, a great deal more than was good for her, of the pleasure of those stolen meetings with Mr. Jocelyn. From thinking about them she began to wish they would again recur, and soon she sought to renew them, saying to herself that it was all her mother's fault for not leaving her at the Rectory, where she was out of harm's way, and for making her so wretched at home that she was glad of anything that would enable her to forget for a while how miserable she was. With such false reasoning as this, she pacified the remonstrances of her own conscience, that inward monitor set to warn us of approaching danger. She soon found what she sought—another interview with the man who praised her beauty, and told her she was much too *good to* be buried in a village like Lipscombe. She

ought to be in London, where everyone would admire her, and where she would lead a very different sort of life to the dull, every-day sort of life to which she was now condemned.

By degrees Jessie believed all that he said to her; besides, was it not the re-echoing of her own thoughts? Still, she hung back from his proposal that she should go to London under his escort. Her heart misgave her. She could not take that final step without dread. The dim consequences in the future were all the more appalling to her, that they took no tangible shape, but loomed in fearful indistinctness in the days to come after. All her school training, all Eveleen Wilmot's kind lessons, all Mr. Herbert's grave warnings, held her back. As yet she could not, dared not go. She felt, rather than acknowledged to herself, that the life appointed for her by God was the only one to bring her peace and happiness, and that the one she desired was the one most likely to bring her nothing but misery and ruin.

Knowing this, she could not yet prevail upon herself to give up her longing desire to throw herself into the life she desired. On the contrary, her longing increased upon her the more she indulged it, and the evening before the marriage, Jessie, in going to the place of meeting, had almost made up her mind to tell her admirer that she would go with him to London the day after.

On her way to the place where she was to meet Mr. Jocelyn, who should she meet but her own mother. Mrs. Ford, who supposed Jessie safe at home, instantly suspected where she was going. She fell into a violent fury with the girl, abused her for deceiving her as she was doing, forgetful that her own treatment had partly driven her to the course she was now pursuing. She insisted on her going home with her, and Jessie had the mortification of returning to the village by one road at the very moment her lover was entering the wood, where he was to meet her, by another.

CHAPTER III.

It was a relief to Jessie when her mother told her she should no longer oppose her going to Town. She should pack her off, she said, without delay, to her Aunt Mason, and get her out of harm's way. How poor Jessie's heart beat with joyous anticipation! London at last! London she had so longed to see! the place of enjoyment and life, and which Edmund had described to her in such glowing colours. It was much to get away from her miserable home, where her mother's recklessness and slovenly habits made everything uncomfortable, and her fits of peevishness and bad temper made everyone so miserable; but it was still more to go and live in that centre of all that seemed to be most desirable to Jessie, where there would always be "something going on," as she expressed it to Susan Preston.

"I am afraid you will be disappointed, Jessie,"

said Susan, "if you expect so much. Even in London one must work to get on in life. Pleasure must be bought with money, and money must be earned, and to earn it you must work, and in earnest too in London, where there is so much competition. I have heard that there is not much time for amusement in London, except for those who live only for the present moment; and then it is such a fearful place for temptation of all sorts. I should be very thankful to be kept out of it."

"Place for temptation, Susan! how can you be so foolish! I do not see why it should be worse than any other place. There are temptations everywhere, even here," she added; and then she wondered to herself if she should see Mr. Jocelyn in London, and thought whether it would be best to let him know she was going, or leave him to find out.

She was obliged to adopt this latter alternative. The difficulty of seeing him on the day of the wedding, or of sending him a message when all were so engrossed with a subject of so much interest as the marriage of the Squire's niece, scarcely left her any choice. As she had been prevented meeting him the evening before, by the untimely interference of her mother, no place or hour of meeting had been fixed, and it was not possible to send him a message, and the next morning early he would *leave* Lipscombe; but as it was for London, Jessie

had no misgivings but that she should see him without let or hindrance. As she had no definite idea of the size of London, she never gave it a thought that it would be a somewhat improbable event to meet with Mr. Jocelyn, unless he had an address by which to seek her. It never entered her head that under such circumstances it was more than probable they should never meet again. On the contrary, London was the only place where they could meet, for even were he not going to leave Lipscombe the day after the wedding, she should never be able to meet him there, now her mother knew all; and she relied upon his desire to see her again to make sure of their meeting.

Eveleen Wilmot was helping to parcel out the clothes which had been made in the school, for the half-yearly sale, when Mrs. Preston came in with some little frocks which Susan had taken home to finish. She told Mrs. Herbert that Jessie Ford was going to London. She had just met her as she came up.

Mrs. Herbert was startled by the announcement. She foresaw in a moment how unwise a thing it was to send a girl like Jessie away from all those who would be most interested to guard her from danger.

"Her beautiful face and pretty ways would be quite snare enough to her without anything else," she observed to Eveleen Wilmot; "but with her

pliable nature, always led away and influenced by the people she is with, the poor girl has scarcely any chance against strangers. If she could only be with kind, God-fearing people, who would set her a good example and exercise a wholesome restraint over her, Jessie would be everything one could desire. But left alone amongst careless or worldly people, I am afraid she is certain to come to some great harm."

"If Mrs. Ford were only more manageable," said Eveleen, "one might show her how absolutely it is throwing the poor child away to send her to Town. Now, if she would only listen to the proposition which Aunt Wilmot made yesterday, it would be so much better for Jessie. Lucy Morton, Aunt's eldest daughter, you know, wants a nursemaid for her children. She saw Jessie in the field with your little Percy and Beatrice, and was so pleased with her manner to them, and the children seemed so fond of her. Lucy Morton is so truly good and pious, Jessie could not have a better example than in her family."

"I am afraid there is not the least chance of Mrs. Ford's listening to any proposition coming from either you or us. She has taken it into her head that we are all in a league to thwart her and prevent her children from getting on, poor woman! and she *will* be only the more determined to follow out her

own plans for Jessie, if she finds we want her to do something else with her."

"I will try what I can do," said Eveleen. "I can but fail, and she might think it more advantageous to let her go to Lucy Morton."

"That is true," said Mrs. Herbert; "but I fear you will not be successful."

Eveleen Wilmot failed, as might have been expected. Mrs. Ford was determined to have her own way with Jessie, and do what she pleased, as she said, with her own flesh and blood. It was with her eyes wide open that the wilful woman sent her child to certain ruin, for Eveleen did not think it right at such a time to flinch from painting the probable consequences of such a step, in the true colours in which her knowledge of life led her to see them. But the more Jessie's friends strove to do what was best for her, the more Mrs. Ford seemed determined to spite them.

Eveleen Wilmot saw Jessie before she left. She spoke most kindly to her, and Jessie cried a great deal, and promised more. At parting Eveleen gave her a Bible, with many affectionate and earnest entreaties to read it night and morning, to let it be "as a light to her feet and a lamp to her path;" and ended by making her promise that whatever happened to her, she would never part with it.

Jessie's tears were all dried up long before she reached her aunt's house in Islington. Mrs. Mason

was not at home when she arrived, but Edmund was, and was very glad to see her, but in a sort of patronizing way, which Jessie thought very strange. She was delighted with the noise, the traffic, and the bustle, and still more with the news that she was to go to the theatre with her aunt the next evening.

Jessie came back from the theatre in perfect raptures. She had never imagined anything half so beautiful in her life. It was, of course, all so new to her. And then a good many eyes had been attracted to her pretty face, and her silly little heart was fluttered by the notice. She anticipated a great many pleasant evenings like this, and wondered how anyone could live at Lipscombe, when they might live in London and enjoy life in this way.

But she found that her aunt was not inclined to take her to the theatre every night. In the first place, she could not afford it, for she had not a very large business, still enough to keep everyone in the house fully employed. Mr. Mason and Edmund looked after the shop, whilst Mrs. Mason and two or three girls made up the dresses and millinery bought in it. Her aunt told Jessie she was expected to help in this work, and promised, if she would be very industrious, to teach her all the mysteries of cutting and fitting on dresses without a premium. It was a very kind offer, and one Jessie knew she was not likely to have every day;

and as Eveleen Wilmot's words still rang in her ears, she determined to make herself as useful as she could, and learn a trade which might some day be of great advantage to her, she did not exactly know when nor how. Jessie's ideas of anything in the future were always of a very vague and indefinite nature.

Her endearing and affectionate manner took very much with her aunt, and she showed her a great deal of kindness and indulgence whenever she had it in her power. Mr. Mason, too, was very kind to her; but as both husband and wife were good, sensible people, they saw it was a greater kindness to exercise a little control over Jessie than to let her have too much her own way.

For the first few weeks Jessie was very docile. But soon she did not relish being shut up in the workroom all day, and sometimes, when there was a press of work, sitting late at night sewing. Several things fretted her. Edmund's manner with her was so very disagreeable. He had altered very much since he had left Lipscombe, and was becoming, or rather trying hard to become, a man about town. Jessie did not like the airs he gave himself with her, nor did she think his manner, with either his uncle or aunt, very respectful, in the shop or out of it. She even wondered the customers put up with the indifference and "uppishness" with which he waited upon them when his uncle was

not present. Edmund was getting very much above his place, and thought that anyone with half his abilities and appearance should have a better field for their display. He went out, too, a great deal more than Jessie thought was quite fair, whilst she was kept at work. She was not present at the reprimands he received from his uncle, or she would have known that it was not always he was out with Mr. Mason's approbation or consent.

Jessie began to think London was not altogether the paradise she had imagined. She was surprised, too, that she had neither heard nor seen anything of Mr. Jocelyn. She had expected to meet him, as a matter of course, as soon as she got to London; but in the first enjoyment and expectations of her new life she had not missed him so much. Now that she began to be weary of the everyday monotony of the workroom, and the lack of amusement which she had hoped would have been so plentiful, she thought more of the handsome young officer, who had made so many pretty speeches to her, and began to fret at the delay in seeing him again.

She wondered she did not meet him, for she was always looking for him everywhere, whenever she went out, either with her aunt or on errands, though she was not often sent out on those. Day after day, as her hopes of seeing him were disappointed, her desire to meet him again only grew the stronger. She forgot, just when she ought to have remembered

it, that had she but resolutely striven to banish these thoughts from her mind, they would have lost their power over her. Instead of that, she encouraged and indulged them, till she began to think herself injured and unjustly dealt with by everyone around her.

The companionship of the young workwomen who came to help her aunt did not improve Jessie. Their conversation, when Mrs. Mason was not in the room, was anything but edifying; and many a thing did Jessie then hear for the first time which should never have polluted her young ears. They canvassed all their admirers, the pleasures they had enjoyed, the dancing parties, excursions, pic-nics to which they had been treated, till poor Jessie's head was turned, and her mouth watered to join in the same scenes of gaiety and dissipation which they described in such glowing colours.

Why was it she was so cooped up? she asked herself a dozen times a day. What would she not give if she were but as free as her companions, to go and come as they might. The poison had entered into her mind, and she saw no contentment but that of having what she so longed for—her own will, and not the will of God, who, even here, sent her a protector in the aunt who, out of her great affection for the girl, kept her in, out of harm's way. It is true she took her out with her whenever she went out, but that was not enough for Jessie. And

then it was to such dull tea meetings, and stupid concerts, and places of that sort, very different from the evenings and nights her companions of the workroom had described to her. Poor Jessie! she had yet to learn, through great suffering, how much better it is to accept without murmuring the life God has apportioned us here below, let it be what it may, even of pain, privation, sorrow, or, what is harder to bear still, dulness, than to have the life we would choose for ourselves, true apples of Sodom, fair to the eyes and tempting to the taste, but within the mouth bitter ashes of death and corruption.

Jessie had been in town about six months, when her brother Edmund left his uncle's business. She had not much cause to regret his going away, for they had had "a good many words," if they had not actually quarrelled more than once lately. But he was becoming quite insufferable, so overbearing, so conceited, there was no putting up with it any longer. One evening that he had been worse in the shop than usual, Mr. Mason told him he was not to go out. This Edmund resented as an insult, and told his uncle on the spot that he would not remain with him any longer.

The angry altercation which ensued upon this ended in Edmund's taking up his hat and leaving the shop, swearing never to cross its threshold again. This terrified Jessie very much; she cried all night,

thinking what would become of her brother, for London had greater terrors for her now that she knew something more of its size, and she could not help thinking of Edmund as of one fallen overboard out of a ship in the middle of the sea, and no one to help him on the midnight waste of water. Edmund, however, was not quite so helpless. Mrs. Mason told Jessie next day that he had already gone to another situation; and, as it had been promised to him for some time, she did not know but what he had been behaving ill in the shop, on purpose to make his uncle turn him off, so that he might go to this place. She did not think it was a situation where he was likely to learn much good. It would expose him to a good many temptations, to be clerk in charge at a large supper room and dancing establishment, as he was now. It appeared he was in the habit of going there very often, and the master of the Rose and Leaf had been so pleased with his manner and address, that he had taken quite a fancy to have him in his establishment.

After a time Jessie was rather pleased than not that Edmund had left. She found, without her having felt it at the time, that he had been a great restraint upon her actions. Now that he was gone, she could often run out when Mrs. Mason was gone to try on a dress, or receive orders at a distance, and Mr. Mason was busy in the shop. Even if he did ask for her when she was out, she had always

some excuse ready to account for her absence when she came in, which he, not knowing much of the domestic arrangements, always took for granted. Had he said anything to Mrs. Mason of Jessie's frequent excursions in her absence, she would have put a stop to some of her flights; but he did not, and Jessie grew bolder; and one evening, when Mrs. Mason was gone out to some distance, and did not take Jessie, who had some work to finish, she actually ventured to accompany two of her work companions to a supper party to which they were going, and for which they easily procured an invitation for Jessie. To her credit it must be said that she did not enjoy this party very much. She knew that her aunt would be justly angry with her if she came home and found her out without her permission, and then she did not feel at ease with the company in which she now was. The women were all so flaunting and loud, and the men showed to so much disadvantage, in contrast with Jessie's memories of Mr. Jocelyn, his gentlemanly appearance, manners, and subdued voice.

"Oh! nonsense!" said one of her companions to her first objection; "your aunt is sure to have supper before she comes home, and I know the last omnibus does not leave Kensington before a quarter to eleven. I shouldn't wonder if she never get home till half-past twelve. We shall have supper at ten, and as I said you should go directly that is over

I suppose you must. But it's always better fun after supper."

Nothing, however, could persuade Jessie to stay a minute after supper was over, although several of the young men declared they should never recover it if she left so soon. She was glad to get away; she felt shy in all this glare of light, alone amongst strangers, without her aunt; and she felt shy of her companions, and very glad to be inside the omnibus, on her way home.

She was very glad to find, on going in, that her uncle had gone to meet her aunt, and it was not for an hour after she was in bed that they came home. The omnibus had left before they had finished supper, and they had walked nearly all the way home.

It was sometime after this before Jessie had another chance of going out on stolen pleasure. But she did not so very much regret such a party as that. She had not been accustomed to such garish pleasure, such vulgar society. Her mind had been toned to a better taste by the grave courtesy and deep earnestness of Mr. Herbert, the gentleness of Eveleen Wilmot, and the peculiar grace which the beauty of her mind imparted to all she said and did. Mrs. Herbert was every inch a lady, and Squire Wilmot a perfect gentleman; even the Lipscombe people of her own class were not vulgar. Their daily intercourse with the higher magnates

of the place, when the circumstances of their life brought them together, had a great effect on them; and there was something in the beauty of the country, in the open-air enjoyment of country life, which toned them all down to a more subdued, and less self-assured manner. Jessie felt quite out of her element at that party, and as yet she shrank from the contact of those who seemed to be lost to every enjoyment but that of vulgar revelry and loud folly.

Then again her thoughts would revert to Mr. Jocelyn. Oh! how different he was to all those would-be fine men, who so disgusted her with their coarse admiration and awkward manners. She quite pined to see him again, and even thought she would like to go back to Lipscombe, if by so doing she might possibly find some trace of him.

One day, towards the end of the season, one of her companions was talking of a large supper party at Cremorne, to which she had been asked. As she really liked Jessie, and wanted to make up to her for that party which she had been obliged to leave so soon, she said she would get an invitation for her, and they would ask Mrs. Mason this time to let her go. Jessie did not seem to care about it much at first, especially if it was going to be like the other party. She was sure she should not care to go; the rooms were so hot and close, and the gas gave her such a headache.

"Oh! but this will be so very different," returned her companion. "You won't be in a room at all, but in the open air all the time. And it is so beautiful under the trees, with the Chinese lamps all reflected in the water, and the music and the fireworks. And then you know," she added, "the company is so much more genteel than it was that night at the Swan Tavern. Lots of ladies and gentlemen go to Cremorne, and lots of officers are there, sometimes, on a spree."

Jessie's heart beat fast at this last piece of intelligence. What if Mr. Jocelyn sometimes went to Cremorne? Oh! she hoped and prayed he might be there that night, if her Aunt Mason would only let her go. Poor foolish child! how she prayed for "quails in the wilderness!" how she fainted and longed for them! not knowing that it would be in wrath for her disobedient striving against His will, that God would grant her mad prayer—in wrath, and yet in mercy, to lead her back to His own fold, from which she, poor foolish lamb! was trying by every means to escape.

After a good many enquiries as to who was going, Mrs. Mason gave Jessie leave to accept the invitation. Two married couples were going to chaperone the party; and as Mrs. Mason knew them both to be of unexceptionable respectability, she had no motive for refusing Jessie what seemed to her a rational indulgence. There was a great deal of

ains taken with Jessie's dress. Mr. Mason ga
er a pretty white muslin, spotted with blue, fo
ie occasion, and this was made up in the wor
om with a great deal of alacrity; as well as a
hite crinoline bonnet, trimmed with white ribbon,
lged with blue velvet, and blue forget-me-not in
ie cap front. There was no denying that Jessie
this toilette looked quite captivating and lovely.
er uncle and aunt were quite pleased and proud
f her, and Mr. Mason going back into the shop,
rought her out a pair of his best light kid gloves,
hich fitted her small hands to perfection.

She departed quite radiant, and in the greatest
pirits. Having the sanction of her aunt and uncle
ade her enjoy her holiday much more than she
id the former stolen pleasure. But it was the
ecret hope which fluttered her inmost heart with
strange thrill of anticipation, which made her
ok so bright and put her in such spirits. And
hen, at last, she entered Cremorne, it was almost
ith the certainty that she was going to see him
ith whom her thoughts had been so pre-occupied.
he was glad to be so nicely dressed, glad to look
o pretty. She had no need of a mirror to tell her
ow attractive she was; the many admiring looks
he received made her quite aware of the fact.

She received a great deal of attention from the
oung men of the party to which she belonged.
s they were of a better class than those she had met

at the Swan Tavern, she might have been pleased with their assiduity. But her hope of meeting Mr. Jocelyn had wound up her expectation to so high a pitch, that these attentions seemed rather to annoy her than otherwise. But the evening wore on, and her hopes were not realised, and her heart sank with disappointment. When they sat down to supper, she could not eat, and seemed so preoccupied that her companions rallied her on her loss of appetite and absence of mind.

It was getting late, and Jessie heard with dismay the married ladies of the party declare that it was time to think of going home. This, then, was the end of her hopes, and everything seemed one great blank around her. Many young men she had seen that night, and more than once her heart had beat tumultuously, as every now and then she saw one who, in height, figure, and style of dress, might have been Mr. Jocelyn. Why should he not be here, as well as so many others? She clung tenaciously to the idea that he would yet be there, if they would only not think of going away so soon.

Some of the younger members of the party begged for another half-hour, and another turn in the garden. Jessie's spirits rose again, and she joined her supplication to the rest.

"I thought you were quite tired, my dear," said the chaperone to whose care her aunt had more particularly recommended her. "It was almost on

your account I thought of going. You are not accustomed to such late hours, I know."

"Oh! please don't go away on my account," she pleaded. "Indeed I am enjoying it very much," she added, brightening up, and determined to exert herself, and not to look disappointed and tired.

So they all went round the grounds again, and admired the Chinese lanterns and the fireworks, and saw the balloon go off. Then some of the young men proposed another dance, which proposition, after a few faint objections on the score of the lateness of the hour, was at length acceded to.

The dance was over, and they were moving towards the room, where some of them had left warmer shawls and wraps for the night air. A party of about half-a-dozen young men came noisily down the path towards them, seeming from their manner as if they had just come in.

Jessie started, and her heart gave such a bound. She thought she should have dropped where she stood. She knew him in an instant; would he know her again? The thought agitated her so much that she could scarcely say something commonplace to her partner, to account for the start, which was too visible to pass unnoticed. Yes! her wild desire was granted; the despairing prayer to see him again, which was in her heart, on her lips, as she mechanically followed those who were *leading* her away! Her heart was so full of wild joy

and anxious questioning, that she forgot to be frightened to find her mad desire thus suddenly granted, or to ask herself why it had been so fulfilled.

Yes! he saw her! No one could help noticing the beautiful girl as she came on to meet him, her eyes brilliant, her face radiant and suffused with blushes. The moment he saw her he knew her again, and he also started with surprise to see her whom he thought so far away at Lipscombe in such a place and at such an hour!

He recovered his self-possession in a moment, and, going up to her, expressed his pleasure at seeing her again so unexpectedly. His words were hurried, for her companions were surprised to see her accosted by such a handsome, gentlemanly-looking young man; and her cavalier shrank back, half-awed by his self-confidence and superior address, half angry that anyone should interfere with the beautiful girl when she was leaning on his arm, at a time when he might consider her his sole property for the moment. But he dared not resent the intrusion; something in young Jocelyn's manner inspired him with a wholesome command over himself. The real fact was, that he felt abashed to find himself in antagonism to one his superior in his position in society; and yet it was scarcely to be doubted that he was the more honest of the two, and felt a protecting tenderness towards the young girl, unknown to the young man now speak-

ing to her, whose pleasure in meeting her again was so wholly selfish.

All but Jessie saw that he was flushed with wine. She was too happy to see anything amiss in his manner, which, though still perfectly gentlemanly and subdued, was yet full of wild excitement and delight. In a few hurried words, Jessie told him with whom and where she was living; and promising to meet him next day, at the place and hour which he appointed, she followed her companions out of the gardens in a state of bewildered joy, scarcely knowing where she was going.

The meeting had been so instantaneous, that only her work companion and the young man who was escorting her had noticed it. The rest of the party had continued their way to the gate, and had only just turned round to see if they were coming, when they joined them.

"It was only Mr. Jocelyn," said Jessie in answer to the bantering remarks of the whole party, when they came to know what interruption had delayed them. "I knew him at Lipscombe," she said, "when he came down to the Hall to Miss Wilmot's wedding. That is all."

CHAPTER IV.

And that was all that Jessie vouchsafed to say to anyone. She did not let her aunt, Mrs. Mason, know a word about her meeting with Mr. Jocelyn. She was wise enough for that as she thought. She knew that it would be sometime, if ever, before Mrs. Mason met any of the Cremorne party, and she thought it best to keep to herself the knowledge that her aunt was not likely to gain from anyone else. But her work companion, who saw the meeting, was not so easily satisfied, to her she was obliged to tell everything; and it was so sweet to have some one to talk to, who knew all about it, that she was quite glad to have taken her into her confidence.

The day following the party, Jessie found some pretext for going out at the time she was to meet Mr. Jocelyn. He was true to his time, and stepped out of the cab which brought him from his club

just as Jessie came round the corner of the street. He was radiant with pleasure, for his companions of the previous evening had not forgotten to talk of his meeting with an old acquaintance in the shape of the prettiest young girl imaginable, and it added no small zest to his good fortune, that all the young men of his club were envious of it and had tried their best to find out who the beauty was, and where she lived—an information Jocelyn would be the last to give them.

Jessie would not remain long with him, she was so afraid her aunt would be angry with her if she stayed out too long, and would prevent her going out again. He took her into a pastry-cook's shop, a few streets off, and there they arranged what present plans they could devise for future meetings. Much as he saw that Jessie loved him, he found her still shy of him, and held back from him by memories which he found difficult to erase from her mind. Her affection for Mr. Herbert, for Eveleen Wilmot, dim memories of the pure and holy lessons they had taught her, the kindness of her aunt and uncle, all held her back from him. She was so terrified at the proposition of leaving her aunt and living in a house he would provide for her that he desisted from his persuasions, eloquent as they were. He found the time when she would listen to such a proposal had not yet come, and till it did he must content

himself with meeting her as often as she could get out.

To this Jessie was nothing loth, and arranged with him to consult her work companion, Lydia Williams, and let him know whether they could meet him an evening or two after and go with him to the theatre, engagements he could not break preventing him from taking them there sooner.

"I do not know how I shall manage it," she said, "I must ask Lydia Williams how I can manage it. She was with us last night—the girl in the pink bonnet, you know."

"Perhaps she will come with you," he suggested, foreseeing it would be to his advantage to make Lydia Williams his ally, besides being a companion for Jessie, who might feel less shy with him if she had some one with her of her own sex and age.

It was a diplomatic move of Mr. Jocelyn's. Lydia Williams was quite delighted with the prospect, and built herself a good many airy castles on the project. She set her invention to work to smooth the difficulties in the way, and got up for the occasion an imaginary aunt from the country who wished to take her and Jessie out to tea with her; not a word of the theatre of course. As the two girls had exerted themselves and worked very hard to finish a dress which was required by a certain time, and going out to tea seemed after all but a harmless sort of thing, Mrs. Mason gave

the necessary leave, coupled with strict injunctions that Jessie should be home early, as it was at some distance and Lydia said they might perhaps have supper, she would say twelve o'clock, but she was on no account to overstay that hour.

This injunction frustrated young Jocelyn's plan to take them after the play to some supper rooms in the Haymarket. Lydia Williams, who had enjoyed herself immensely at the theatre, or rather the attentions of the companion Jocelyn had brought with him for her sole and special entertainment, had no idea of forfeiting the chance of a good many more such evenings as this by want of punctuality with Mrs. Mason. She insisted on their return at the time mentioned, and Jocelyn was obliged to give way, very much against his will, and send them home in a cab.

Mrs. Mason was pleased to see they were as good as their word, and did not refuse to let Jessie go for a walk in the Park next Sunday afternoon with Lydia Williams, or again to tea with her at her cousin's in Brompton. She thought Jessie was going out a good deal, but as both the girls worked willingly she could scarcely refuse them. And then she did not know anything against Lydia's respectability. Her father and mother had been good honest sort of people, and she seemed a good hard working girl herself. But Mrs. Mason never took it into account that Lydia was vain and

frivolous, and though she had been to both National and Sunday schools yet the good seed which had been sown had fallen among thorns of worldliness and was speedily choked up. The inward monitor which ought to have reproved Lydia Williams for so deceiving the employers, who was so kind to her, and for aiding in the ruin of a young girl under their charge in order to gratify her own vanity, love of dress, and love of pleasure, had long ago been silenced by her inattention to its warnings, and both the girls careered thoughtlessly, nay joyfully, along the road which was leading them both to inevitable ruin.

One evening when they had obtained leave to go out, the late post from the country brought Mrs. Mason a letter from Lipscombe. It was directed in a hand she did not know, which circumstance rather alarmed her. On opening it she found it was from Mr. Herbert, who wrote to tell her that Mr. Ford had met with rather a severe accident whilst shoeing a vicious horse. His arm was broken and, it was feared, two of his ribs, besides a severe kick on the head which had rendered him insensible at the time, though he had, since then, recovered consciousness. He thought it best to write to Mrs. Mason and beg her to break the sad news to Jessie as gently as possible. Her mother desired she should come home directly, as she should want her to help in the house and manage the younger

children. Mr. Herbert ended by saying t Jessie were sent down by the first train i morning he would send a man with the c meet her, on her arrival at the station.

Mrs. Mason was very much shocked anxiously waited for Jessie's return. Thi delayed two hours over the time she ha pointed for her to be at home, and, had i been for the contents of Mr. Herbert's letter, would have had the reprimand she had so deserved. As it was Mrs. Mason thought the of her father's accident was enough at a tim she broke it to her as kindly and as gen she could.

The burst of tears which followed the anno ment that Jessie was to leave London next ing at such an early hour seemed quite natu Mrs. Mason. Nor was she very much sur that Jessie should cry all night, in spite of a efforts to console her, nor that she should to the station next morning without touch mouthful of breakfast, and with her eyes a and so swollen. "She is such an affecti creature," she said to her husband, "and has an affectionate heart."

Jessie was overwhelmed with the suddenn the whole affair, and thought wildly at fi rushing away to Mr. Jocelyn and utterly re *to go* down to Lipscombe. The difficulty wa

though she knew where she was to meet him, she did not know where he was to be found in the meantime. What would he say if she did not meet him as she had promised? What a fool she thought herself that she had not gone to him altogether, as he had wished; then it would have been beyond the power of anyone to force her to leave Town whether she wished it or not. No time even to write him a letter; how would he know where she was? and then she remembered that Lydia Williams would hear all about it from Mrs. Mason, and she would take care to tell Mr. Jocelyn. She would write herself to Mr. Jocelyn and send it to Lydia Williams to give to him, only how was she to write without her mother's knowledge, or receive any answer? All night her thoughts rushed wildly over all the probabilities of her present situation, and brought to her nothing but tears and reckless despair.

Mr. Herbert's light cart was waiting, as he had promised, at the station. The Rector himself received her at her father's door. The affectionate tenderness of his manner was all thrown away upon Jessie, who felt nothing but her own grief at being torn away so unexpectedly from the life of happiness she was leading in London.

It was not till late that night that she could find an opportunity to write a few lines to Mr. Jocelyn. These she enclosed under envelope to Lydia Wil-

liams, begging her to see him, and give them to
This she carried about with her all day befor
could post it, and she was fretful and peevish
ful lest the post should go out before she ha
opportunity of putting it in the box. What
Mr. Jocelyn say, not even to have a line from
It was no sooner posted than, in her impat
she expected an answer from him, and she
the next morning to watch for the letter carr

It was well that she did, for he was co
straight to the house with a letter from Lydia
liams; and had she not been on the look-ou
mother would have had it, to a certainty. Jessi
it with eager hands, glanced at the address, an
it in her bosom, to read when she was at leis

When she opened it, she found it enclosed
from Mr. Jocelyn. This was more than Jessi
expected, and she was joyful in proportion.
had seen him, and told him all that had happ
and how she had been hurried away from hin
all the despair she was in. But he would
down and fetch her away, and she should be a
with him, and no one nor anything should se
them evermore. He had a friend living at Wo
who had asked him to come down for the sho
and if she was not back in London before that
he would be there before the fortnight was
He was vexed he could not go before, b
thought it would be best not to come down st

to Lipscombe, nor without having some pretext for being in the neighbourhood. She must keep up her spirits till then, and depend upon his coming, for he could not live without her any longer, and meant to fetch her away from those who were always thwarting his happiness. He should write again, if he found she had his letter all right; but he thought it safest not to write too often, as his letters might be intercepted, and he advised her to be cautious also. Lydia Williams' letter was pretty much to the same purpose, except the proposition that Jessie should leave Lipscombe with Mr. Jocelyn. And she also advised her friend to be cautious, especially as her mother knew about Mr. Jocelyn; and she must keep up her spirits, and come back to Town as soon as she could.

It was a very long fortnight to Jessie. She soon found out that there was no idea of her going back to Town. Her mother told her from the first that she would have to make up her mind to stay where she was, and help work for their living; for if her father recovered, Dr. Ashly said it would be some time before he could work again. As soon as Jessie came home, Mrs. Herbert took Betsy as under-kitchen-maid. It was one mouth less to feed, and the two shillings she brought home every week would help to pay for clothes and shoes for her little brothers and sisters.

Mr. Herbert came to see the wounded man every

day, but Jessie somehow always contrived
him. When he did get a chance of spe
her, he found her very much altered, abs
resentful. Mrs. Herbert was not more s
with her, and she positively refused, in
dogged and sulky manner, to go down wher
Wilmot came on purpose to see her. Tl
her mother very angry, and she was not s
her language to her. She told her she wo
none of her airs from London now she w
home; she would have to make up her m
satisfied where she was. There were no
gentlemen at the Hall to be running
making her disgrace herself and everyone
to her, meeting them in woods and suc
places. She should stay at home now, a
her own business. There was nothin
mother's manner to awaken the slighte
of remorse for the flight which Jessie n
from her parents. On the contrary, every
said, everything she did, only confirmed
the resolution she had taken. Mrs. For
was not yet softened by the misfortune w
overtaken her; and her coarse innuendoes a
invectives only hardened Jessie's heart, a
her hate her home and all connected w
thoroughly, that had she possessed mone
own, she would have gone back to Tow
diately. There she would have gone to L

liams, where Mr. Jocelyn would join her, as soon as he knew where she was; and he would not let her be served as her mother served her, she indignantly said to herself. But she had no money, and she was obliged to wait till he came to fetch her, and every day seemed to Jessie longer and longer.

It was her consciousness which made her avoid Mr. Herbert, his wife, and Eveleen Wilmot. Knowing what she did, she dared not look them in the face. It was thus by her own fault that she was removed from those holy influences which might yet have saved her. When the end of the fortnight came, and brought Mr. Jocelyn to Wootton, he found her anxiously expecting him and longing for the end of his visit, that she might go back to Town, away from a place which had become hateful to her.

He so contrived to shorten his visit to his friend, that just a month after her father's accident Jessie disappeared from Lipscombe. After some altercation with her mother about it, she went out in the afternoon, and was met by several people in the village going up towards the Wootton road, though this was only spoken of afterwards. When night came, and she did not return, her mother was at first very angry, and then became very uneasy About ten o'clock she put on her bonnet and shawl, and ran up to Mrs. Preston's cottage. Mrs. Preston got up out of bed to answer her excited summons, and *then put* on her bonnet and shawl, and set off

for the Rectory, to ask Mr. Herbert's advice in the matter, whilst the terrified Mrs. Ford went back to her maimed husband.

Mr. Herbert had just come in from a visit he had been to pay to an old parishioner who was dying. When he heard Mrs. Preston's story, his mind misgave him sadly. Everything he had noticed about Jessie lately led him to the conclusion that she had left Lipscombe; and, strange coincidence, he had heard that afternoon, for the first time, that Mr. Jocelyn had been for the last ten days on a visit at Wootton. On Mrs. Herbert's coming into the room, he told her all he feared, and taking counsel with Mrs. Preston and his wife, he put on his hat and went down to the Fords' house.

They scarcely knew how to act, as it was of the utmost consequence to keep the intelligence that Jessie was missing from her father, whilst he was in his present state. Fortunately he did not ask for her that night, and Mr. Herbert left, promising Mrs. Ford to do what he could in the morning. He telegraphed at once to the station-master in London, giving a description of Jessie, and begging him to stop her if he could. But as Lipscombe was some miles from the station, and several hours had elapsed since she left home, before the message reached London, there could be little doubt, but that long before that time, she had passed through the station on her way to her new destination wherever it was.

CHAPTER V.

BEFORE the afternoon of the next day it was known by all Lipscombe, that Jessie was gone. As usual in such cases, a great many things came out afterwards, which, if spoken of at the time, would have prepared those most interested in her for the final catastrophe. Several people had seen Mr. Jocelyn on the Wootton road at different times walking backwards and forwards, as if he were expecting some one; certainly not the partridges they thought, though he was in shooting jacket and gaiters, and had his gun over his shoulder. Another had actually seen Jessie walking with him, and on the very afternoon that she disappeared, had met a fly on the road to the station, with some one in it very like Jessie. On inquiry at the station, it was found that Jessie had actually taken a ticket for London, and had gone up in the 4 P.M. train; whilst a gentleman

in a shooting jacket, and having a gun box with him, had gone up in the next train, and one of the porters quite believed his name was Jocelyn. "Least-a-ways," he said, "it was Jocelyn he had read on the address of the gun box, as he handed it into the carriage to him."

When it was so publicly known, there was no hiding it any longer from the father, that his child had left the shelter of her home, with one who was not likely to afford her much protection. At first he was stunned with the intelligence, and then he burst forth into furious imprecations against the ungrateful child, and the man who had so dishonourably stolen her. The consequence of such an outburst of passion at a time when he was so ill able to bear it, was a fit of delirium in which he raved and wept by turns. For a whole week he hovered between life and death, and when he began to recover his senses, there was a dull look in his eyes, and a numbness of feeling all down the left side, which made Dr. Ashly look grave when he noticed it. He told Eveleen Wilmot who had been watching the sick man, that he believed the left side would eventually become paralyzed. The blow he received on the head, when the horse kicked him, would predispose him for this, and the great mental shock of Jessie's flight would accelerate it. A man who was so *often* in liquor, had not the stamina to bear with

impunity such physical and mental shocks to the nervous system, so close one upon the other.

Mrs. Ford was to be pitied when she heard what new misfortune threatened her. She cried bitterly, and cursed Jessie as the cause of all this misery. In vain did Eveleen Wilmot, Mr. Herbert, Mrs. Preston, try to comfort her, and turn her anger against Jessie into compassionate love. She was not to be comforted; at least for the present, and all they could do was to wait for a more propitious hour.

"I do not wonder that she feels bitterly," said Mrs. Herbert to her husband. "What can be more cruel to a mother than to find a child so thankless and ungrateful, so devoid of all common feeling, to say nothing of affection, to leave her father in this disgraceful manner, at a time when misfortune is already pressing so heavily upon him."

"Yes!" replied Mr. Herbert; "it is hard to bear; but what makes it still harder for Mrs. Ford, is that, she knows that she herself is the most to blame in all this. She knows that Susan Preston would not have acted so cruelly, so selfishly to her father and mother, for the very reason that she reverences and loves those who have given her such a home-training of love, and truth, and godly fear. Poor Jessie has had no such home-training; and little, very little real love from her parents. When did her father show her anything

but perfect indifference, as to anything she sai
did, so long as she did not thwart his ease or c
fort in any way? When he was so angry
her, it was because he felt the disgrace of
flight, more than anguish for his lost child. F
her mother she never received any love, b
foolish fostering of vanity there was, an encour
ment to dress, her vanity flattered, and her be
praised. Not only did she set her a bad exa
at home, but she thwarted every effort made
others to counterbalance her bad training, or
her child from the ruin which has overtaken
Mrs. Ford is wild with grief now, for the rem
of an accusing conscience, makes it keener to
She cannot say, 'I did my best, it is God's
that I have not succeeded.' She knows she
done her worst, and she also knows that, 'G
not mocked.' "Whatsoever a man soweth,
shall he also reap;" and Mrs. Ford is reaping
what she and she alone sowed. I pity poor Je
she has not had a chance, not even common
from the father and mother to whom God entru
her. And if she is never found again, but ut
perishes, it will be a heavy charge for the accu
angel to bring against them in the last awful
of reckoning!

It was no doubt, this last conviction w
urged Mr. Herbert to leave the care of his pa
to a stranger, and go up to London, that

wilderness, to seek for the lamb that he had lost. His heart yearned for poor Jessie; he knew she had been as much sinned against as sinning, and he had always felt more for her on account of her wretched home, than he otherwise might. For a whole fortnight he searched diligently for her, but without the slightest success, or even glimmer of encouragement. Of course she had never been near her aunt, Mrs. Mason. Lydia had heard from her to ask for her box, which she had left with her aunt when she went down to Lipscombe, thinking she might come back soon. As Mrs. Mason was busy at the time she had asked Lydia Williams to pack it, and see that it went off. But whether it went down to Lipscombe or to meet Jessie somewhere in Town, she could not tell. The day after Jessie left her home, Lydia Williams had changed her lodgings, and came no more to her work.

As a forlorn hope he went to the club to which Mr. Jocelyn belonged. He scarcely thought he would be there, yet he might, and it cannot be denied that Mr. Herbert would have liked to stand face to face with the cruel wolf, who had come into the very fold to snare away the poor lamb he loved with all a shepherd's love. But this satisfaction was denied him. Mr. Jocelyn had not been near the club for nearly a month. They thought he was in the country, and gave Mr. Her-

bert his address at Wootton, a place he but too well knew he had long since left.

There was not the least shadow of an excuse why Mr. Herbert should remain in London any longer; and then his duty in Lipscombe called him back. Sad and with a heart full of foreboding he returned to the Rectory. Those who met him there were prepared for the failure of his efforts, but the disappointment was none the less.

"We have done all that it is possible to do at present," he said to his wife. "For some inscrutable purpose of His own, God has not vouchsafed to restore her to us yet. I earnestly trust that some day He will bring her back to His fold, by His own ways and means. I cannot think that He wills it, that she should be utterly lost. Oh! no, He will save her in His own good time, and that He will be mercifully pleased to do so, must be our most earnest and daily prayer."

And Mr. Herbert did make this his most earnest and daily prayer. There was scarcely a moment of the day even in his most arduous duties, that the poor child was absent from his mind. It seemed as if his spirit accompanied her, to shield her from absolute ruin, and he ever bore her in his heart to the Throne of Grace, to plead her cause earnestly with God.

In the meantime he devoted himself to the unfortunate father and mother, and by degrees he

worked his way with both. The father was, at first, stupified by his last attack, and gradually partial paralysis stole over him. He was subdued and softened when he found himself helpless as a child, bound down in his chair. Mr. Herbert was unremitting in his kindness, and by degrees his heart opened itself beneath those kindly rays, and after a while he began to listen as if he derived the greatest comfort from the consoling words of the "Great Consolator," which Mr. Herbert read daily to him, from the gospel which He came to give us. He read to him the blessed invitation to the weary and heavy laden with sorrow and sickness, to go unto Him. "Come unto me all ye who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

And he did go, humbly, in answer to that gracious invitation; at first shyly, knowing how greatly he had always resisted Him, rather saying, with St. Peter, when he first came to the knowledge of the power of Christ, and knowing his own sinfulness, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." By degrees, when he learnt to know the patience, the compassion, the long-suffering of the Saviour, who waited day after day to give him His blessed rest, he came fully to accept that rest, to know how full, how perfect it was. With Mrs. Ford, Mr. Herbert had an easier task. She had not so much mind as her husband, and was more easily persuaded in her great grief

to accept what was said to her. The kindness of the women who had helped to bear her burden, had also the most beneficial influence on her. Mrs. Herbert often went to see her, and give her housewifely counsel. Eveleen Wilmot bringing delicate food to tempt the invalid to eat, and wine to strengthen him; would have many a kind soothing word for the wife. Whilst Mrs. Preston or Susan, giving a helping hand in the work, would cheer her up, and talk of happier days; pointing to Betsy, growing up to womanhood, and womanly duties, under the training she was receiving in Mrs. Herbert's household. The girl was often sent down from the Rectory to help her mother, and her affectionate ways with her parents, the willing obedience she was gradually acquiring in her new school, her gentle manners, comforted them greatly, and made them hopeful of a happier future for her, than for the poor lost Jessie. The three younger children went regularly to school, and, when they came home, though things were not yet as tidy, and as comfortable as they might be, still there was a vast improvement, and the children's tempers improved accordingly.

Before all these changes had taken place, there had been a letter from Jessie. The sight of it was a gleam of hope to all interested in the poor child. What if the man who had taken her away had *already* deserted her, and she was coming back to

them? But this hope soon fled before the contents of the letter. She said in it that she was married to Mr. Jocelyn, that she was very, very happy. He had hired such a sweet little house for her, and she had everything she could wish. They were not to grieve for her, for she was very comfortable. She had leave to write and tell them so, but she must not tell them where she was.

Nor was there one sign on the letter which could lead anyone to guess from whence it came. It bore the London post-mark, and that was all. Mr. Herbert groaned in spirit when he read it; but to her mother he said,

"You see, though poor Jessie has grievously sinned, she has an affectionate heart still for you. Had she been as indifferent as you thought her, she would not have written this to satisfy your anxiety about her. Oh! no! her heart is not corrupted yet. God shield her, poor child!"

"Do you think she really is married, sir?" timidly enquired Mrs. Ford.

Mr. Herbert looked at the unfortunate mother, waiting almost breathlessly upon his answer. He felt it would be more real kindness to show her how little ground she had for this hope than to leave it to deceive her. He pointed to the sentence in the letter which said, "but I must not tell you where I am."

"If he had married her," he said in his kindest

tones, "he would not have any reason to hide so cautiously from her parents, or from those would rejoice to hear they might yet respect I am afraid I must not leave you this h grieved as I am to take it from you."

His kind manner, his gentle tones fell like b on the poor mother's heart, even whilst it fa within her. She took the letter, courtesied de to Mr. Herbert, and wiping her eyes, she w home. Before she reached it, she had put letter in her bosom, and going up to Jessie's serted room, she laid her head down on the low where her child's used to rest, and wept bitte

Mr. Herbert thought it right the father sh know they had heard from his daughter. Ki and cautiously he broke the news to him. poor man trembled and turned pale, but recove himself he said,

"Let me see her writing, sir."

"Will you read it me, sir? I don't see so c as I used. She was a good scholar, and wrot beautiful hand; but I don't, somehow, see so c as I used to."

Mr. Herbert did not wonder that the fa could not read his child's letter, for his eyes w dim with tears. After he had read it to him folded it up, and putting it back in the envel waited for Mr. Ford to speak.

The poor man shook his head and sighed hea

Leaning back in the deep easy chair which the Squire had sent down for him from the Hall, he folded his hands and shut his eyes, murmuring to himself, "It is the Lord? Let Him do what seemeth good in His eyes."

Soon after this, bad news came from Town about Edmund. He had lost his situation at the Rose and Leaf, for which he had left his uncle's shop. His employer had dismissed him because his accounts were not as correct as they ought to have been. He could not prove that Edmund had defrauded him, but there was room for strong suspicion that he had. He wrote a very flippant, high and mighty sort of letter to his mother, protested his innocence, and even talked of action against his late employer for defamation of character. He did not want for friends, and had already another situation, even better than his last.

"I am sorry to hear it," said Mr. Herbert, when he had read the letter. "I fear the temptations in such places are too much for a boy of Edmund's nature. I only hope he is innocent of having tampered with the accounts. If he has once begun that sort of thing, there is no knowing where it will end."

This was like a re-opening of the first wound to the father and mother, but they bore it more patiently now. They had learnt to know whence these trials came, and their growing faith in the

mercy and wisdom of God enabled them to wait upon Him, beginning, as they were, to see that out of seeming evil He would, in His own good time, bring forth good.

It was now little more than a year since Jessie had left her home. Mrs. Herbert was sitting after tea with her husband, and was looking, as many ladies do, very carefully over the lists of births, deaths, and marriages, to see if she found any of her friends amongst those mentioned. She uttered a hasty exclamation, and on Mr. Herbert raising his head from a letter he was writing, to ask her what was the matter, she passed him the paper, pointing to the paragraph she had been reading. Mr. Herbert read it over twice before he could be certain that he had read the announcement of the marriage of Captain Charles Edward Jocelyn, of the —ieth Foot, with Miss Isabella Mary Taylor, daughter of Colonel Taylor, of Eaton Hall, Yorkshire. A little farther on, in another column of the paper, there was a list of passengers who were to join the Calcutta mail at Marseilles. Amongst the names were those of Captain and Mrs. Charles Edward Jocelyn.

"God have mercy on the unfortunate girl!" said Mr. Herbert. "Deserted and alone, what will become of her now?"

"Perhaps she will write home now, and you may be able to trace her out."

"God grant she may!" fervently ejaculated Mr. Herbert.

And the letter did come at last—a wild, despairing, incoherent letter, blotted with tears, almost illegible. With great trouble they made out that she was left alone with her baby, and utterly desolate and wretched. She did not care what became of her now that he was gone; but she would never more come back to the home she had disgraced; a poor, miserable outcast, broken down and utterly ruined.

Poor Jessie! If she had but known how the hearts of her faithful friends, of her father and mother, yearned over her, what tears were shed, what earnest, humble, supplicating prayers went up daily, hourly, in her behalf, would she have come back? No! they could scarcely hope it; but she would have felt less lonely, less wretched, and would not have fled out into the desert, as she had now done, reckless with despair.

Amongst the guests who came down to the Hall that Christmas was a Mr. Robinson, the friend who had given Squire Wilmot the four New Zealand sheep, of which George had had charge ever since. There had been a goodly increase in their number since the day they had first come home; and the Squire showed them off to his friend with great pride in their well-doing, praising their young shepherd, and speaking highly of his integrity,

intelligence, and his skill in handling sheep. These commendations were not lost on Mr. Robinson, who was on the look-out for a lad who knew something about sheep, to go out as shepherd to New Zealand with his son, returning to that country in another month. George was rather younger than the age his son had mentioned; but if Mr. Wilmot could give him so high a character, he thought he could not do better than secure him for the situation.

"That boy would do well in any situation," said Mr. Wilmot. "He has been well trained in the fear of God and love for his parents, and he has a stout heart and a high courage." And then he told Mr. Robinson the whole affair of Farmer Waxsall's orchard.

"I must have that boy for William," exclaimed the New Zealand proprietor; "at any price he would be invaluable to him; quite a treasure in a colony like ours, where so much, too, would depend on his zeal, integrity, and intelligence."

Mrs. Preston turned pale at the proposition. "Her boy! her George! her pride! Oh! never! never!" Mr. Herbert tried to calm her, and show her how much it would be to the boy's advantage. But she shook her head; great sobs broke from her heart, and choked her voice.

"He shall not leave thee, mother," said her husband quietly, "if thee takes on so 'bout it."

These few words of affectionate sympathy from her husband did what Mr. Herbert had failed to do, with all his kindness. Mrs. Preston listened in a sort of resigned desperation to all the advantages for the boy which Mr. Robinson pointed out, and then she listened to Mr. Herbert, and promised to be more faithful and accept this great trial, trusting in the wisdom and love of Him who sent it to her. George was partly well pleased to go and see this new country Mr. Robinson described to him so graphically; glad to try this new life, to have hundreds of sheep to tend and look after; partly sorry to leave his father and mother, Lipscombe and all his kind friends.

He stood before Eveleen Wilmot, a fine, well-grown lad of his age, with ruddy cheeks and curly brown hair, and large sparkling, honest, brown eyes. His head was reverently bowed on his breast before her who had been the guardian angel of his childhood, his teacher and kind monitor, who had brought him through the hardest trial of his young life.

"I know you will do well, George," she said to him in her calm quiet voice, and the tones vibrated like soft music on the brave lad's heart. "God-fearing, reverent, and obedient to your parents, kind and considerate to your fellow-creatures, truth-loving, brave-hearted, God will help you in all you undertake. He will prosper the work of your

hand. He is with you wherever you go. Never forget that He is ever near you; nearest ever in your greatest danger and trial. George, never doubt His wisdom, His love, His power evermore to save and defend you."

Squire Wilmot sent ten pounds for George's outfit; Mr. Herbert a small box of well-chosen books; Eveleen Wilmot a box of tools, and a valuable book on the breeding and management of sheep. His mother's present was a Bible, whilst his father gave him a good stout English oak stick, which he had cut for him, from the oak in the field under which they had sat so many years, under which George had learnt so many previous lessons from the lips he reverenced most in the world, and loved with a deep affection, even those of his father. Mark Preston engraved the boy's name and age on the stick, and the date of his departure.

His mother and sister worked hard to get him ready. They made all his shirts and "got them up." His father went down to Southampton to see him off, and came back, his lip quivering and his eye dim. But he went about his work, grave and silent as ever, but full of tender affection to his wife, and cheery words of hopefulness in the evenings before bed time. George's name was ever in their morning and evening prayer. It was *only the* first night that Mark Preston's voice

faltered as he pronounced it, and a wild sob broke from the lips of the mother. But after that his voice never wavered, it merely took a tone of deeper meaning to pronounce that beloved name; the name of the fearless lad whom he loved with all his heart.

After the bustle of the preparation to get George off was over, the mother and sister felt the heavy blank which had fallen on them, and Mrs. Preston seemed as if giving way for want of something to take her out of her own thoughts; some stirring work to rouse her energies and occupy her mind. It came soon enough in the shape of a letter to Mr. Herbert from Mrs. Mason, telling him of the new disgrace which had befallen Edmund. He had been taken up for robbing his employer, had been convicted before the magistrates, and was now in prison waiting for the Spring Assizes, only too certain when they came of a heavy punishment.

This was a cruel blow to the Fords, almost worse than what had gone before. The shame and anguish of mind, brought on a severe attack of paralysis, which rendered the father helpless as a child. Mrs. Preston was indefatigable in her help to Mrs. Ford, who was almost sinking under this new calamity. Mrs. Herbert and Eveleen Wilmot, went and came in the sick room, carrying comfort to the mind and body of the wretched father and

mother. Mr. Herbert went up to Town again on an errand of merciful pity; visited the unfortunate Edmund in his prison, and gave him what comfort he could. Edmund confessed his guilt to him, promising to acknowledge it at the trial, detailing to Mr. Herbert step by step, the temptations and the fall, day by day, which had led him to this. Edmund was very penitent, and listened with many tears and groans to Mr. Herbert, as that master in knowledge of the human mind, pointed out to the unhappy young man, how everything which had happened to him had been entirely his own doing. The Rector of Lipscombe returned home, to bring the joyful news to the parents, that to Edmund had at last come, that "change of mind," which God in His mercy vouchsafes to send to those whom He designs to pluck as "brands from the burning."

Soon after the assizes, and whilst Edmund was undergoing his sentence of hard labour for three years, a letter came from George to his mother. He wrote lovingly, full of hope and life, spoke of his voyage as of something quite delightful; described all the wonders he had seen, and sent affectionate messages to all at home, and his respectful duty to "Miss Eveleen." The mother kissed the letter twenty times a day. It lay under her pillow all night, and all day on her heart; and she thanked God for His great gift of

her precious boy, whilst her thoughts flew over the vast space which separated them, and accompanied him on his voyage, and her prayers and her love surrounded him as if they would shelter that beloved head from every danger, spiritual or temporal, that might overtake it.

Part Third.

REPENTANCE.

Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance."

CHAPTER I.

A PLAIN brougham was standing in one of the streets leading south from Kensington Gardens. It had been waiting some time when the door of the house, before which it was standing, opened at last and a man came out, and, saying a few words to the coachman, walked on. As the carriage followed him, stopping where he stopped, and going on when he did, it was evident that it belonged to him, only why he did not avail himself of the comfortable seat within, instead of walking on in the November fog which enveloped the leafless trees in a drizzling mist, was a puzzle best known to himself. He walked on neither fast nor yet slow, his forehead bent down, earthward, as is the way with men who are great thinkers. He was thinking too this evening, and that rather anxiously, for he had just left a patient whose case had, as yet, baffled his well-known

skill. It was an unusual thing for Dr. Carlton, the well-known and eminent physician, to be so baffled. His penetrating eye usually detected the obscurest symptom, in the changing cheek, the fluttering pulse, the unsteady, feeble eye. But this evening his experience and skill had both failed him. The patient he had just left was evidently sinking into the grave before his eyes, and, as yet, he had not discovered the treatment which should arrest, if only for a time, the signs of approaching death. He still continued his way on foot. It seemed as if the exercise of walking gave him a freer power of thought than he had when sitting comparatively inactive in his carriage.

He turned up a wider street, where large bare trees, with a few blackened leaves still clinging to the dripping branches, overhung a high wall, the enclosure of the grounds belonging to a mansion in that neighbourhood. As Dr. Carlton drew near to the entrance gate of those grounds, a sharp, hollow cough, whose sound was only too familiar to him, arrested his attention. A few steps further on, and he saw a young girl sitting on the stone steps which led up to the portico of the house. He would have passed her after the first momentary distraction from his thoughts, so deeply was he buried in them, but a second fit of coughing, worse than the first, seized the girl. It was a most distressing cough, speaking to the practised

ear of the physician of disease and exhaustion. Dr. Carlton who was well-known for his kind heart, was touched with immediate compassion, and going up to her, remonstrated gently with her for being out so late in such an evening.

As the fit of coughing lasted some minutes, it was not so much in the hope of an immediate answer that he thus addressed her, but rather by way of introduction to an inquiry, when possible, into the causes of her cough, and her present forlorn condition. As the physician bent over her, he saw the pale emaciated face, the attenuated form scarcely covered with a shabby dress and scanty shawl. She was shivering in the penetrating fog, falling with a pattering sound from the gaunt trees overhead to the dead leaves strewing the path below. Her face seemed sharpened with disease and thin with hunger.

"Why do you not go home, my girl," he asked her, when her cough had subsided. "Do you live far from this?"

She lifted a pair of large eyes, dilated with suffering and sunk with want, to the kindly beaming face bending over her. She looked vaguely at him for a moment, as if considering what question he had asked her, and then, hiding her face in her hands, burst into tears. The kindly voice came too late to save, but not too late to shew the sufferer that all pity had not vanished from the earth.

"Come, my girl," he said, kindly, but with authority, "this will not do; this will not get you home, and the longer you sit here the worse it will be for you. Tell me where you live, if it is any where near I will see you home, or at least safe into the hands of some one more fit to take care of you than you seem yourself."

The girl faintly murmured the name of a distant street, and when Dr. Carlton enquired what she was doing so far from home in her state, she added, almost as faintly, that she had been to look for work.

"Work!" repeated the physician, "you are not fit to work, you ought to be in your bed and have food and medicine."

"Food!" said the girl, "where shall I get food unless I work for it? Oh, leave me here to die, it will be the greatest mercy you can do me!"

In these few despairing words the experienced physician divined a tale of woe and horror, too common, alas, in the high ways and by ways of the great Babylon of the nineteenth century. Bending over the wounded creature, who had fallen among thieves who had robbed her of all she possessed, the good Samaritan spoke words of comfort to her, and urging her to rise, put her into the brougham. Stepping in himself, he bid his coachman drive to the address she had given him. It was a poor and narrow street, with dingy look-

ing houses enough. When Dr. Carlton saw the bare room where the poor girl lived, devoid of every comfort, the wretched pretence for a bed for her wasted limbs, the extreme contrast of her poverty and misery with all the comforts of affluence which he saw in his daily rounds could not fail to give him some serious thoughts. Not but what his philosophic mind recognized how inevitable was the existence of such a contrast, circumstances being what they are, and effects the unerring result of causes. His instant thought was how to mitigate these circumstances in the present case as much as he could. Something in the voice, the look, the misery of the unfortunate girl, her weak state, her illness, claimed his sympathy and help.

He summoned the landlady of this miserable house, and, giving her money and a prescription, which he wrote on a leaf he tore out of his pocket book, he bade her procure warm gruel, a little wine, and a soothing medicine without delay. A few necessaries were added to the bed and room to make it more comfortable, and when he had seen the girl have the gruel and the medicine, he left her, promising to see her next day.

He did not forget his promise, but came again and again. On the fourth day he brought an order of admission into a hospital, where he said the greatest care would be taken of her, and she would

have every comfort. He would see her daily as he was one of its consulting physicians.

Ellen Seymour, for such was the name the poor girl had given to Dr. Carlton, was removed from the close ill-ventilated room to the open airy ward of the hospital, to which the physician's influence had secured her an entry.

CHAPTER II.

THE care and kindness she received from both the medical men and the nurses who attended the patients in those clean, comfortable beds, soon worked a change for the better in poor Ellen. She lost that forlorn, haggard look which had so impressed Dr. Carlton the first evening on which he saw her; and though she continued very ill, and her cough was at times most distressing, yet she was so far better at the end of a fortnight that she began to notice her neighbours in the bed on each side of her.

The occupant of the bed on her right seemed to sympathise most with her. She had such a nice, kindly face, and it wore such an expression of peace and heavenly comfort. Ellen Seymour had noticed from the first that she often sat up in her bed and read a book which she knew was her Bible. She would smile with such a beautiful smile as she read, that Ellen Seymour felt quite attracted by her face. The reader would lay down her book, and

seeing Ellen looking at her, would smile on her, and speak words of kindly comfort to her. A feeling of affectionate friendship sprang up, before long, between these two; and when Dr. Carlton came one day to see Ellen Seymour, he found her new friend, Jane Thompson, who was allowed to get up sometimes, seated beside her, and telling her all about herself, and the painful complaint which had brought her to the hospital.

"And yet you never complain, Jane," said Ellen. "You seem always so cheerful, and yet you must suffer a good deal."

"I do at times," Jane replied; "but then you know, dear Ellen, I always remember Who sends me all my sufferings, and I know it is for some good purpose, though I may not see as yet why it is sent. And then see how kind everyone is to me, especially the doctors, who have given me so much relief. Can I be grateful enough for all the kindness I receive here?"

"And yet, Jane, you told me your disease was incurable."

"Yes, I believe it is. I may live, they say, many years, but shall never be much better than I am now. That matters very little, dear Ellen; is it not all preparing me for that happier home where one day I hope, through my Saviour's all-atoning sacrifice, to be?"

Whenever Jane Thompson spoke in this way,

Ellen Seymour would groan, and turning round in her bed, hide her face in her pillow, drawing the bed clothes over it, as if she would fain hide herself from every eye. At such times Jane Thompson redoubled her kindness to the poor girl, and soothed her with words of pitying love. She saw that there must be some tale of unutterable woe behind all her suffering and distress, and her sympathising heart longed for a confidence which would enable her to speak hope and comfort to her.

There seemed to be some great change working in Ellen Seymour. At times she would say to her companion, "How happy you are, Jane! Oh! how I wish I were as good as you! But no; I am so very wicked, there is no hope, no mercy for me. He told me so;" and the poor girl writhed with mental anguish on her bed.

"Look up, dear Ellen! Don't give way like that. Trust in God. Has not our Saviour's death purchased a way even for the most wretched sinner to return to Him? And you must not think me good, for I am not good, but sinful, as we all are. But I am happy, dear, because God has mercifully led me to know Him by suffering. 'Before I was afflicted I went astray,' but now I trust in Him who has said, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'* Remember, love,

* Isa. i, 18.

that 'whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.' It is to draw you to Him, dear Ellen, 'with the cords of His love,' that He afflicts you; 'therefore despise not the chastenings of the Lord, nor faint when He rebukes thee.' Only love Him as a good and loving father ought to be loved, and you will soon feel that it is not in wrath, but in mercy, that He chastens us, to lead us to Him."

"Oh! Jane! you do not know how wicked I am. I was taught to love and serve God, but I left Him and followed my own sinful will. I have forsaken the God of my youth, and He has forsaken and cast me off for ever."

"Never, dear love! never believe that!" Jane exclaimed earnestly. "Even to the last God waits for us to return and seek Him. Whilst you are yet a long way off, your Father sees you, and waits for you to return. He sends His messengers to bring you out of the thorns of His trials, to give you a crown of peace and happiness, if you will but return to Him. Come now! come to your Saviour. See,

'With feet nailed to the cross, lo! He waits for thee!'"

she added, with eyes uplifted and dim with tears.

"Oh! Jane! you do not know all. When you do, you will say as he did, that there is no hope for *the* wicked. He said it: 'The wicked shall be

turned into hell, and all they who forsake God.' I hear him now. He said that when the gates of heaven at the last day shall have closed to receive the righteous into the joy of their Lord, the wicked would be left outside, where the horrible fiends, grinning and laughing at them, would clutch hold of them with sharp talons, and bear them off to eternal burning in the lake of fire and brimstone, prepared for all them who forsake God."

Ellen Seymour poured out these awful words with frightful rapidity, as if in the delirium of fever she saw the horrible scene she described. She rolled on her bed, and bit her pillow to choke her screams, and the blood gushed from her mouth.

"Oh! my poor dear child!" said Jane, raising her up tenderly in her arms. "God forgive the cruel wretch who told you such frightful things. My darling! lean on your Saviour's arm. Look with what tender pitying eyes He is bending over you, if you would but seize fast hold of His hand, stretched out to save you. He would tenderly carry you in His arms, and no one would be able to pluck you from Him. Oh! Dr. Carlton!" she exclaimed, as the good physician drew near, "some wicked, wicked wretch has told her frightful lies, and has frightened her nearly to death."

"She soon will die," he thought to himself as Jane removed the handkerchief, soaked with blood,

from the poor, pale lips, and hastened to give her the remedies the physician sent for.

"Ah! that is the way they kill both body and soul," Dr. Carlton said, as Jane in a low voice told him what Ellen had said to him. "I wonder what sentence will await those who do the devil's work so completely, in their own self-righteousness and thirst for vengeance, forgetting that God is a God of love not of hatred, like themselves. You are right, Thompson; if we do not want her to die in this state of mind, poor soul! you must do your best to give her more peace of mind, and try and make her see God as He is, a God of mercy and love and long-suffering. We cannot fight against such odds. It is enough of the shattered body, without the terrors of the mind. Another such an attack as this, and she slips through our hands."

For more than a week Ellen lay exhausted both in body and mind. Jane was unceasing in her attentions to her, and her low gentle voice, full of tender pity, fell like balm on Ellen's mind. Once she looked up and smiled in Jane's face with such grateful eyes that Jane bent down and kissed her, whilst Ellen stole her arm round her neck and drew her closer to her.

That same evening Jane sat beside Ellen's bed and read to her the story of the prodigal son. She read it so slowly, so full of tender meaning, *that* the words stole into Ellen's heart. When the

reading was over, Jane closed the Bible and began to speak of the infinite mercy and love of the father thus waiting for his son, although the son had so grievously offended, going far away from his kind father, forsaking him to go amongst strangers, and eating up all that his father had given him, as "we all do, dear Ellen," she said; "when we use the powers of mind and body which God has given us, to serve our own desires be they ever so opposite to His holy will, and barter wildly, to purchase the vain pleasures of this life and our will, all our hopes of heaven and the gracious promises of God through Christ to us. Reduced to feed the swine, the unclean desires we have served, we are fain, in our hunger and need, to eat the husks of sin, the food of these unclean beasts. Can we descend lower? can we be more polluted? can we be more wicked, wretched, forlorn, farther from our Father? And yet, does our Father cast us from Him? is He not waiting? Whilst we are yet a great way off, in the midst of our wickedness and wretchedness still, our Father is yet waiting for us. He permits us to fall into the very lowest depths of misery, "that out of the deep we may call unto Him;" and then His lovingkindness dawns upon us; we remember the love He once bore us. The thought comes into our minds, floods it with a gush of yearning penitence. How could we forsake so good, so kind a Father? And then

the yearning to return comes over us, stronger and stronger, till at last the cry bursts from our hearts, our lips, "I will arise and go to my Father and say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." And does the Father repulse us, or grant us only half a pardon? Does He make us as one of His hired servants, as the prodigal in his humility prays to become? oh, no! whilst we are yet afar off He meets us, He flings His Fatherly arms around us, He gives us the kiss of peace and forgiveness; calls for the robe of His righteousness to clothe us; shoes for our bruised feet; a ring of honor, the gift of His restored grace, as a signet on our hand. And who told us that this is the way our Father acts to every prodigal son who returns to Him? A man who might dream a fond dream which had not the shadow of truth or reality in it? No, dear Ellen! the Son of God, God Himself, told it to us! Oh, hear His voice now saying to you, "return, poor prodigal, broken, and wasted, and worn, and weary in the service of sin, return to your Father who loves you and is waiting for you, I myself will lead the way."

Ellen turned round and looked full in Jane's earnest face, the tears were streaming down her own; "oh, Jane," she said, "I would return to my *Father*, if I only knew how!"

"You are on your way back now, my love." said Jane; "those tears of yours are tears of affection and yearning for this good Father who is waiting for you. You who now hate the sins which brought you so low, you wish most anxiously to leave them, to cast them off, to return to God, to submit yourself wholly to His holy will; to serve Him and Him only, not seeking your own way, but following Him wherever He points, let the path be ever so painful and thorny."

"Oh yes, Jane, I do! I feel so happy, Jane! I hope I may never, never go away from Him again. I am sure I shall never wish it, for it is best to remain with Him."

"May you ever feel so, my darling," said Jane, kissing her tenderly; "Now you must lie down and be very quiet, and go to sleep if you can. Here is your medicine, love, I think it soothes your cough."

CHAPTER III.

A DAY or two after this conversation, Ellen as
Jane to look in her box, which had been fetc
from her lodgings, for a clean handkerchief.
thought she had one left. Jane looked over
few things the box contained, but could not
what she sought at first.

"There is this one wrapped round a book.
it is your Bible, Ellen," she said, as she unwrap
a book bound in brown sheepskin. "Let me l
at it."

"Oh! no, Jane! please don't," Ellen implo
"Please give it to me."

But it was too late. Jane, not thinking E
could have any objection, had opened it and
on the fly-leaf, "Jessie Ford, from her affectio
friend, Eveleen Wilmot. 'If ye love me, keep
commandments.'"

"Oh! Ellen dear! what is this?" said Jane
Ellen covered her face with her hands, whilst

tears trickled down between them; "is not this your book?"

"Oh! yes, it is mine," she said at last; "a very kind and dear friend gave it to me."

"Is she dead, dear?" asked Jane kindly.

"I hope not," said Ellen. "Oh! she was so very good and kind to me. Dear Miss Eveleen! if she only knew where I was, how grieved she would be!"

"Who is Miss Eveleen?" asked Jane, striving to win Ellen's confidence, for she felt there was a great deal in her story she could not even guess at.

"She is the daughter of our Squire," answered Ellen; "and our Sunday-school teacher. It was she who gave me this book when I left home to come to London."

"Is your name Jessie Ford, dear Ellen?"

"Yes," she answered, after a little hesitation, blushing as she spoke.

"Why did you change your name, love?"

"Because I did not want any one to know at home how very wretched I had become. When he—he left me, I made a vow no one should ever know where I was."

"But that was wrong, dear," said Jane, gently reproving her; "it is unkind to your friends. They must be so dreadfully anxious about you."

"No; they will have forgotten me long before this, dear Jane. I hope they believe me dead; I am sure they must wish it."

"I do not think you do them justice, dea
must tell me all about your leaving hon
about your friends; then I can judge better w
they would like to see you or not."

"To-morrow I will tell you all, Jane."

"And why not to-day, dear love?" asked
coaxingly. "Do not put it off till to-mor
feel sure it will do you good to tell me. Yo
know by this time that I wish for nothing bu
is for your good."

"It is such a dreadful story."

"Never mind, dear. The sooner you tell
better; it will be off your mind. I shall n
you any the less when I know it."

After much coaxing and soothing, the po
told Jane how she left Lipscombe and went
with her aunt Mason, how she met with he
again, and left her home and all her friend
with him.

"You do not know, Jane, how he swore he
marry me, and I only went away with him
solemn promise to marry me as soon as we
London. Of course he never did. You n
that I ought to have known that he would n
I could not mistrust him. I really loved
dearly I believed every word he said, ever
day after day he invented some excuse
keeping his word. At last he grew angry w
when I reminded him of it, and he was

when he was angry. He was once before, when Mr. Herbert called at his club to enquire after him."

"Who is Mr. Herbert, dear?"

"Our Rector. Oh! he is so good, so kind. He was kinder than my own father to me, Oh! if mother had only let me stay with him and Mrs. Herbert!"

"Never mind that now, my love. God had other purposes for you. Tell me how you came to be left in London."

"Oh! Jane! that was cruel. To take me away from those who really did love me, to leave me, leave me and my poor baby, forsaken and friendless!" and the poor girl hid her face in her hands, and wept bitterly.

"Hush, dear! hush! Not friendless, not forsaken. See how your Heavenly Father has been watching over you, and how, at His own appointed time, he sent good Dr. Carlton to save you from death, and bring you here."

"I must tell you all, Jane, now I have begun. Oh! he used to be so cross to me, and told me I must be a fool ever to think he would marry a poor girl like me, whose father was a blacksmith; and if I bothered him any more about it, he would go away and leave me. Soon after my baby was born, he had a lot of letters sent him from his club, and then he said he must go away on business for a day or two. He came back and told me to pack

up his portmanteau, as he must go to his fa
who was ill. He promised to write to me, bu
never did, and never came back from that d
this. How I used to look out day after day for
letter, which never came! How my heart sa
day after day the postman passed, and
brought it! No other letter came to me, for n
knew where I was."

"And what did you do, poor child?" asked
with a voice low with emotion. "Had he left
any money?"

"Yes, I had some, and his servant, or at
the man who said he was, brought me some
which he said had been left for me. He packe
the rest of his master's things, and took them
with him. Even then I could not, would no
lieve he was gone not to come back again."

"Did you remain long where he left you?"
quired Jane.

"About ten days; then the landlord sent f
rent for the next quarter, and when he found
none to give him, he told me I must leave. I
so dreadful to leave the place, to think that I sh
never get my letter if I went away from the
he did not know where I was. And then if he
back, how could he find me again if I was not th
I would have written to tell him I was oblige
go, to tell him how wretched I was, and my
baby so ill. But where was I to write?"

"Poor, poor child!" said Jane, tenderly. "Why did you not go back to your own friends?"

"Oh! how could I, after bringing such disgrace on them? Leaving them as I did against all their advice and remonstrance, how could I go back to them when I was in such trouble? No; I wanted them to believe I was dead, and so I wrote home to tell them they would never hear of me again. Soon after this my poor baby died. Oh! that was a sore blow to me!"

"Poor child! But what did you do for a living?"

"I remembered the name of some people where Lydia Williams used to work before she worked for Aunt Mason. I went there, and as they happened to be pressed for work, they took me on. It was dreadful hard work, for we sometimes worked twenty-four hours at a stretch, when a lady wanted her dress sent home in a hurry. At such times we had scarcely a minute to eat our meals. It made me very ill, and so I lost my work; for when I went back, they told me they had taken another hand in my place, and they should not want me any more. I had not any money then; I had spent what little I had when I was ill, I could not get work anywhere; and—and—but I could not help it, Jane, for I had not eaten anything for nearly two days, and that evening I had such a supper as I had not tasted for many a long day—I do not think

even hunger would have driven me to this
was nearly mad with despair."

"How was that, love?"

"I will tell you. This was on a Monday
day before, after wandering in the park, not
ing what to do, where to get work, I pa
church where service was going on. I tho
would go in. I seemed to yearn after som
word, and I remembered how kindly Mr. E
used to speak, and how he always stilled t
thoughts in my heart. The church was qui
of well dressed people. I was so shabby,
was ashamed to go in any further than the
So I stood near the entrance, but where I
see the clergyman who had just gone up in
pulpit. I thought I knew him, so I lool
him again, and then I saw that it was Mr
Effingham, Squire Wilmot's nephew, wh
down at Lipscombe, some years ago. I fel
he saw me, and knew me again, for he look
way, and then he began in a voice which s
to sound like thunder in my ears, and said
wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the
forget God!'"

"What?" exclaimed Jane, "was it he wh
those horrible things about the judgment da

"Yes! it was he; oh, how I trembled. I
not tell you how I got out of the church, n
I tell you half the dreadful things he said

God's just indignation against sinners, and His thunders always ready to be hurled at the head of those who forsook Him. I felt as if I should faint in my place. I could not go away, something seemed to hold me there till I heard all. After that I thought to myself, if there is no hope for me, then it does not matter what more I do, and I felt so utterly wretched and reckless, I really did not know what I did."

"Poor child; may God forgive him for his false teaching, which drove you to despair of Him," said Jane, pressing the poor head down to her bosom, where it lay.

"When I could get a bit of work," Jessie went on to say, "I did it, and got something to eat, and when I had no money and nothing to eat, I used to go out at night and get some the best way I could. But I was getting very shabby, for I had pawned nearly all my best clothes, and no one would have anything to say to me. One night it rained hard, and I got soaked through, and was so exhausted with having nothing to eat or drink all day, that I sat down on the doorstep of a court, and was there all night. I think I have had my cough ever since. I thought, the evening Dr. Carlton picked me up I should have died! Oh! how kindly he spoke to me, to me the wretched outcast! I felt how unworthy I was, that he

should take any notice of me, and I was almost angry with him that he would not leave me there to die."

"But you do not feel so now, my love?" asked Jane.

"Oh, no Jane! how can you ask? I am so grateful to him! He acted just like the Good Samaritan. He did not stop to ask whether I was worthy his pity or not. He saw me dying, and sent me here. It was God who sent him to my help. God who made you so kind to me. If you had not been so kind, Jane, I could not have spoken to you as I have done."

"I am so glad you have told me all, dear. See how mercifully God has brought you back to himself, even from the very depths of despair. Bu you must let me write to your friends. They wi be so glad to know where you are."

"Oh! no, please Jane, don't do that. I am su they don't want to hear of me any more. Besi what good would it do. I cannot go back Lipscombe even if they wanted me, and I am s they do not. I never could look any of them the face again. They have forgotten me by time, Jane."

"No, love! I feel sure from what you have me, that they have not forgotten you. N Mr. Herbert, nor Miss Eveleen, no nor yet

father and mother. And there are your little brothers and sisters; should you not like to see them again?"

"Oh, yes Jane! very much. But it is they who will not want to see me again. I have been such a shame and disgrace to them all."

"You must not think of that, dear. It is your duty to let them know where you are. You have caused them grief enough, give them now the joy of knowing that their lost sheep is at last found, ready to re-enter the earthly fold, in which God placed you, as you have His heavenly fold. But not now, love, you will see this in another light than you do now. At present you are tired."

The devotion and spirituality of Jane Thompson's mind, brought back to Jessie the religious teachings of Mr. Herbert and Eveleen Wilmot. Her own sad experience of life taught her their true import, and she became docile as a little child, and believed as humbly and as simply.

Dr. Carlton came in a day or two after whilst Jessie was asleep, and had a conversation with Jane Thompson about her.

"I am very glad," he said, "that you have written to her friends. I was in doubt what to do with her, when her time is up here. I cannot get her another ticket of entry, for some little time. I had thought about the hospital at Brompton.

I think I could get an admission for her then but then she would of necessity be throw amongst strangers again, and I do not think th is good for her either morally or physically. should be glad to know she is with her frien again, poor child."

"Do you think, sir, she will ever get bett again?" timidly inquired Jane Thompson.

"I am afraid not," he replied. "The mischief the chest is very extensive. There may be anoth attack of hemorrhage at any time that a sufficie cause exists. At present she may be moved wi ease, and with kind and affectionate treatme and with soothing influences, she might last months. Beyond that I cannot give you a hope."

"I think she is prepared to go," Jane answer

"I am glad to hear it" said the physician, ": it will not be very long before she does."

CHAPTER IV.

THERE was great joy in Lipscombe Rectory that the lost sheep was found. Eveleen Wilmot had carried Jane Thompson's letter to Mr. Herbert, before it had been an hour in her possession. She found the Rector and his wife in the library, little expecting the good news she brought them. After the first burst of thankfulness and congratulations, they began to consider what had best be done. They were all unanimous in their opinion that she had better be brought down to Lipscombe as soon as she could be removed. The difficulty at first was, whether she should go home to her mother or be taken to a house where she would have more quiet, and be more under the immediate care of Eveleen and Mrs. Herbert. Mr. Ford was still so great an invalid, and required so much attention, that his wife would have but little time to bestow upon Jessie, besides which the noise and bustle of the younger children would be too

much for her. Eveleen Wilmot thought one of his father's old servants, who had married and settled in the village, would be glad to let them have a room which her daughter used to occupy before she went to service. It was an airy, good-sized room which could be freshly whitewashed and cleaned up, and with some things she could send down from the Hall, it could be made quite comfortable.

"And I will go and see Mrs. Ford," said Mr. Herbert, "and prepare her and her husband to receive their child back with a welcome which shall prove to her that she really is returning home. But," he added, "we must not leave Jane Thompson out of our arrangements. She has done too much for Jessie to be overlooked by any of us. We must have her down here, to nurse her and continue the good work in her which she has so well commenced. Do you think Mrs. Wilson could find a bedroom for her also?" he asked Eveleen.

Eveleen thought she could, if another room could be found for a lodger she had in the house at that time. "And perhaps it would be as well," she added, "that only Jessie and Jane Thompson should be Mrs. Wilson's inmates; it would secure more quiet."

Whilst Eveleen and Mrs. Herbert went on this errand, Mr. Herbert took his way to Mrs. Ford's house to break the news to her of her daughter's near return, and her serious illness.

A marked change had taken place in the Ford family during the period that had elapsed since Jessie left her home. Mrs. Ford was quite an altered woman. Her slovenly and dilatory habits had given way to a housewifely care and readiness which had effected wonders in the aspect of the house, both indoors and out. Much of this change was due to the great and unremitting kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert and Eveleen Wilmot to the suffering husband, as well as to their forbearance and patience with the wife. Little Betsy, too, had her share in this change for the better. When Mr. Ford grew so much worse after Edmund's misconduct, Betsy was sent down every day to help her mother, and at last was obliged to give up her work at the Rectory, and remain at home altogether. The good habits she had contracted at the Rectory, and the training of that notable housewife, Mrs. Herbert; her natural industry, energy, and love of order, which had been so judiciously fostered and developed by her skilful mistress, were invaluable, both in their influence on her mother, as well as in the domestic arrangements. Gradually, when all was neatness and order around her, Mrs. Ford's fretfulness gave way. The children, now always neat and clean and ready to the minute for school, no longer provoked her; and not only did they gradually get trained to a ready obedience, but she became trained to more patience with them, from

which mutual behaviour a greater and truer affection had sprung up between the mother and children than had existed before. With this wellspring of love once directed in its true course, Mr. Herbert had found his difficulties with Mrs. Ford vanish, and she began to welcome him with a smile and her best courtesy, till at last she came to bless the sound of his feet across her threshold, for they were "the feet of him who brought her good tidings of great and enduring peace and joy."

She was very much affected when Mr. Herbert told her that her lost child was found, and cried bitterly when he told her how ill she was, and for what reasons it was judged better she should not come home to her father's house, but go to the one Eveleen and Mrs. Herbert would prepare for her. With true Christian feeling Mr. Herbert dwelt but lightly on poor Jessie's career and sufferings since she left home. The mother's heart was too full of joy and grief as it was, to be still further harrowed up with the sad picture Jane Thompson had been able, from Jessie's own narrative, to depict so graphically in her letter to Eveleen. Mr. Herbert was also very anxious to avert anything like a scene when Jessie arrived, as Dr. Carlton had said that excitement of any kind might be fatal to her.

"You do not think, sir," exclaimed Mrs. Ford, "that I could ever be so wicked as to upbraid her for leaving us, poor child! and she a-dying. Oh!

Lord! oh! Lord! my Jessie, my own child!" and she rocked herself to and fro crying.

"No, Mrs. Ford; I would not do you so much injustice as to think that. I am sure you are quite ready to fall upon her neck and kiss her; but you must be careful and refrain yourself as much as possible for the sake of the child for whom your heart yearns. Be as quiet with her as you can; show her the deep affection you bear her, but restrain its outbursts. It will be the greatest kindness you can show her."

"Oh! sir! oh! Mr. Herbert! I will, I will!" sobbed the poor mother. "But my heart is so full now, I cannot at first take it as patient and quiet as I ought to; but I am sure I am very, very grateful to you, sir, and to all kind friends, who have never tired all these weary years showing me and mine so much goodness. My poor husband! what will he say? Oh! do, sir, take and break it to him gentle, if you please. I am sure he will take on dreadful when he hears poor Jessie is a-coming back. He always were fond o' her, though he didn't often show it much like; but he were always proud o' her, 'cause she were such a fine scollard, he usen to say."

"I will tell your husband myself," Mr. Herbert said kindly to her. "That was part of my purpose in coming here; and I was sure it would cheer you up so to hear that your dear child was found again.

I half thought of going up to fetch her myself, but on reflection I think it will be best she should come down with Jane Thompson alone; it will excite her less. I am sure you will feel very kindly towards the good woman who has been so kind to Jessie."

"Oh! dear heart alive! and so I do now, sir. Lord! what a many kind, good people there is in the world! I am sure I often wonder why people are so kind, when they get nothing but trouble for their pains."

"They are all servants of the Most High," reverently returned Mr. Herbert; "doing their Master's work whenever and however He has appointed them. That is why their hearts never fail, why their patience never tires, and blessed indeed are they. 'Forasmuch as they have done it unto the least of these, they have done it unto their Lord.'"

Mr. Herbert found Mr. Ford very weak, and unable to bear much. Gently as he broke the news to him, the father was quite overcome with his feelings of joy, gratitude, and grief. At last Mr. Herbert succeeded in calming him, and then he remembered another piece of good news for the Fords, which Eveleen's arrival with her news had put out of his head for the moment. This was contained in a letter from George, which Mrs. Preston had received the day before. He told them that if Edmund would come out to him when his sentence

was finished, he would get something for him to do. There were many out there who were getting on very well, and who had yet done worse things, with less excuse than for Edmund. Mr. Herbert said that he hoped to get some friends to help him to send Edmund out to George, in a manner which would benefit him.

"The Lord is very merciful to us," said the poor father; "the Lord is very merciful."

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things," said Mr. Herbert, "even they shall see the loving-kindness of the Lord."

Mrs. Preston and Mary were so glad, so grateful when they heard that Jessie was found, and was coming home. They offered to get her room ready for her, an offer which Mrs. Wilson readily accepted. They were soon busy with pails and scrubbing brushes, whilst Mrs. Herbert went to and fro, and helped to place all the invalid comforts which Eveleen sent down to furnish the room.

Clean and comfortable and very pretty it looked when they had finished their joint labours. There was the comfortable arm-chair for Jane Thompson close beside the roomy bed, with its soft pillows and snow-white dimity curtains, prepared for Jessie. There was a room close by, waiting for Jane, very comfortable too; but the greatest pains had been bestowed on Jessie's room, as it would also be a sitting-room for both. When all was finished,

Mr. Herbert came to inspect, and his look was sufficient to express how pleased he was with all they had effected.

All they had planned and prepared for the two friends had been duly reported to Jane; and when everything was ready, they wrote again, to tell her to bring the lost sheep home. The morning she received that letter Jane stood beside Jessie's bed, holding it in her hands.

"It is from Miss Eveleen, dear," she said in answer to Jessie's anxious question. "She sends her love to you, and wishes you to go down with me to Lipscombe as soon as you can be moved, and Dr. Carlton says you may be moved now any day."

"Oh! Jane! Jane!" said Jessie, hiding her face in her pillow.

"Well, dear! you do not want me to go alone, do you? Dr. Carlton said he could get you into the hospital at Brompton, but then you know I could not go with you. You would not like to be alone again with strangers, should you?"

"Oh! no indeed! I should feel lonely."

"Well, dear love," Jane resumed coaxingly, "why not come with me? I do not want to leave you to strangers, but you know I must go somewhere, and unless we go to Lipscombe together, we must be separated. Miss Eveleen thinks it will do me good to go down into the country for a little while. But I *will try* and stay longer with you, if you like it best."

"Oh! no, Jane! I am quite ready to do what you think best. You must go to them all; they are so kind and good."

"But not without you, love," said Jane, decisively.

"I will go wherever you go, Jane!" said Jessie. "Oh! I could not bear to lose you now;" and she put her arms fondly round the neck of her friend, who stooped down and kissed her.

"Your poor mother is so anxious to see you, dear," said Jane, sitting down beside her; "and so is your father. But he is worse since you saw him. poor man!" And then she broke it to her, gently, how Edmund had got into disgrace, and that George, who was in New Zealand, had written for him to come out to him. Mr. Herbert thought it best she should be told of this before she came down to Lipscombe.

"And Mrs. Herbert sends you her love, dear; and she and Miss Eveleen have got you such a nice room at Mrs. Wilson's, because it was thought the noise of your little brothers and sisters might disturb you. Mrs. Preston and Mary cleaned it out and set it to rights so nicely; and Mr. Herbert, when he went to see, said he hoped it would not be long before you came to enjoy it."

Jessie cried happy tears. She kissed Jane again and again. "Oh!" she said, "how long the time will seem to me before I see them all again!"

CHAPTER V.

BUT it was not long before Jessie did see them all again. She bore the journey much better than could have been expected. A comfortable easy carriage had been sent down to the station for her, and Mrs. Herbert and Eveleen Wilmot were waiting to receive her in the room their kind care had prepared for her. It had been judged best that no one else should see her the first day, and Jessie herself seemed grateful for the arrangement.

Next morning she asked to see her mother. When Mrs. Ford came she behaved very much better than either Mr. or Mrs. Herbert, or Eveleen, had dared to anticipate. She kissed Jessie very affectionately, but just as if she had seen her only yesterday, and sitting down beside her talked quite calmly of the goodness of God to them all. This was the effect of great resolution on Mrs. Ford's part, but Mr. Herbert knew whence she had

derived the courage to conceive it, and the strength to carry it through.

It was not for a day or two after that Mr. Ford saw Jessie, and then came Betsy and the little ones. They were all very good and very quiet, but were not allowed to stay very long, for it seemed to fatigue Jessie if she had too many visitors.

Though it was a mild winter, and the day on which Jessie had come back to Lipscombe had been more than usually bright, even for a bright February day, Jessie seemed to have suffered more from her journey than at first they thought she had. She gradually became weaker, and only one visitor was admitted at a time to see her. Jane, of course, never left her, except at night. and then she slept with both doors open, and would stand beside Jessie's bed at the least movement or cough. This was thought too much for Jane, who was so great a sufferer herself, so Susan and Mrs. Preston took it in turns to be with her at night. Jessie became so fond of both, for their great kindness and unwearying devotion won her heart. Mr. Herbert saw Jessie every day, and read and talked to her in such a gentle manner, that Jessie looked eagerly for him, at his usual hour of coming, and seemed to feel quite disappointed if he were detained for only a few minutes. Eveleen Wilmot also came every day to sit with her, and Mrs. Herbert, who

prepared all Jessie's food, the small delicacies could eat, beef tea, jelly, and light custards, ı her own hands. They all seemed to vie with (other who should be the kindest to the poor d: girl, and shew her the most unwearying and a tionate devotion.

As the spring advanced Jessie visibly decli Mr. Herbert administered the holy communic her twice, only Eveleen, Jane, and himself b present. Very little excitement seemed too n for her now. About the first week in May Jane was sitting beside her as she lay, proppe with pillows in her bed so that she might see lilacs and laburnums in flower and the setting on the church tower and the rectory beyond asked Jane to send for Mr. Herbert and her fa and mother.

"I do not believe I shall see another sun, Ja she said, "I feel as if I were going very fast n you do not know how my heart seems to more and more slowly."

"Dear, dear child!" said Jane, checking rising emotion in her heart.

"I am not afraid to go, Jane," she said, loo out on the glowing sunset beyond, "I do not to stay, for I am going home to the Father wh forgiven me so much! Is that Miss Eveleen?' asked, after a while, as a light footfall on the s *caught* her ear. "Oh, yes, dear Miss Evel

she said, with a radiant smile, as Eveleen entered the room; "I am going home, and I am so happy, for I know now that I shall meet you in heaven!"

"God grant I may, dear Jessie," Eveleen answered, as she reverently approached the bed, feeling the awe of one who knows they are in the presence of a spirit already standing on the threshold of eternity. How beautiful Eveleen thought Jessie looked in that supreme moment, as she half sat gazing out into the sunset, as if she already discerned the approach of the white-robed, swift-winged messengers on their errand to fetch her home. The peace of mind she had now so long enjoyed had imparted to her countenance a spiritual expression possessed only by those whose thoughts are fixed on heavenly things, whose hearts are full of the love of Christ. Her eyes were preternaturally large and brilliant, and her thin white hands were partly stretched out as if in eager expectation.

"Mr. Herbert will soon be here," Eveleen said, in low tones to Jane, "I met Mrs. Wilson going to fetch him!"

At that moment Mr. Herbert entered the room, with the first glance he saw how it was with Jessie. Going up to her, he took her hand, and looking at her, said in low, fervent tones; "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow

of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

Jessie answered him with a look beaming with heavenly joy. Her lips moved as if in response, but no sound proceeded from them.

"Let us pray," said Mr. Herbert, kneeling down beside the bed; and there in the rays of the golden sunset, now slanting into the room, he commended, in the fervent language of the church, the soul of our "dear departing sister" into the hands of a loving Father. When Mrs. Herbert came in with the weeping mother, Jessie lay back on her pillow, a smile of ineffable beauty on the parted lips, whence the last breath had already exhaled. Eveleen Wilmot bent over the pale young face, and tenderly and reverently closed the eyelids over the eyes, gazing forward as if they still looked into eternity.

It was a lovely May afternoon when the funeral took place. The church which at all times looked well, had never shone in such beauty as it did that afternoon, embosomed in a semicircle formed by the beautiful trees of Mr. Wilmot's park, clothed in the tender green of their earliest leaves. The sun shone in full splendour on those leaves, on the tender green of the grass-grown graves around, sparkled on the white marble of the monuments of departed lords of the manor, rearing their heads amidst the graves of their poorer,

humbler brethren. The birds sang in the trees, in the joyous tones which the spring alone inspires to these feathered choristers, their ever renewed song of praise and love. But Eveleen Wilmot waiting in the churchyard, and the reverent awe-hushed throng, circling around to witness the funeral of one born among them to die so young, thought no song of birds, joyous and loving as it might be, so full, so grand, so glorious as that which rang through the summer air, in the clear, rich, melodious voice of Mr. Herbert, as clad in surplice of spotless white, he went down the path to meet the slight grey coffin, borne on the shoulders of those who had known her in her beauty and innocence; and returning at the head of the slow procession, chanted in a cadenced chant, which filled the churchyard, the woods, the valley beyond, the triumphant verses, opening the burial service for the dead:

"I am the resurrection and the life saith the Lord, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."*

Eveleen bowed her head. Yes, she saw Him, saw the Lord of life and light, bending above the sister prostrate in the dust at His feet, pleading

* John xi, 25, 26.

for her dead brother. Saw the divine glory lighten from His eyes, crown His head with a crown of ineffable glory, as in words clear and Godlike, He asserted His Almighty power to quicken and raise the dead to life eternal!

A few years after Jessie's death, George Preston stood once more in his father's cottage, a fine stalwart man, bronzed by the sun and wind, the love of his mother's heart, the joy of his father, the pride of the loving sister. The confidence of his master had been placed in him, and God had prospered everything he took in hand. He returned to bring the blessings of life to the father and mother, who had reared him in the fear and knowledge of the Lord. He returned just in time to endow his sister Susan with an acceptable marriage portion, and remained long enough to see her comfortably settled in a pleasant home, with a husband, who like herself, "served the Lord his God with a whole heart." He brought news of Edmund Ford, which gladdened the hearts of father and mother, and reconciled them to the parting which awaited them, when George Preston asked them for, and took away as his wife, the Betsy whom Mrs. Herbert had so well trained and

taught, that she was the very model of a wife for a colonist. Their next daughter was ready to take her place, as beautiful as Jessie, but adorned, thanks to Eveleen and Mrs. Herbert, with that greater beauty of discretion, honour and virtue, which enhances the price of such a woman far above rubies. Edmund Ford sent home small sums yearly to his father and mother. Soon this increased, and Mr. and Mrs. Ford knew peace and happiness in their children, and lived to see their children's children "growing up in the fear of the Lord, which alone is the beginning of all wisdom."

Jane Thompson lives on at Lipscombe, helping in whatever work there is "of true, and lovely, and of good report." Mr. Herbert and Eveleen Wilmot would not part with one who had done so much for her they had loved so well. The neighbouring families had sent her needle-work, which supported her for a time, when a small legacy from a distant relation, set her above want, and enabled her to give up more of her time to the office of nurse to the sick in body, consoler and comforter of the sick in mind.

And for those four faithful servants of the Lord who "day and night do His bidding," and show forth His loving-kindness and merciful long-suffering, what reward awaited them? Even the

crown of success, with which He crowned their labours in this life, and after death the commendation which they should hear expressed in those thrilling words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

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THE END.

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